the weekly
Standard

MAY 13, 1996 $2.95

IS THIS ANY WAY TO RUN A PLANET?

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Eleanor Rodham Roosevelt?
NOEMIE EMERY

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STATES RIGHTS—WHO CARES?

What a great idea! It's just what every American has longed for: Yet another federal agency soaking up taxpayer dollars to perform a function better managed at the state level.

Yet that is what's happening in Washington. The financial services debate is deadlocked in the Congress over the states' rights to regulate insurance. Currently, approximately 10,000 officials regulate insurance at the state level. Insurance regulation is—and has been for over 200 years—the responsibility of states.

Now, a power grab by a federal bureaucracy—the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC)—is threatening to stamp out state authority to regulate insurance and force the creation of another layer of bureaucracy and regulation in Washington.

Unless this states' right is protected, the day will soon come when Congress will be forced to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to oversee the $488 billion insurance industry—the largest industry exclusively regulated by the states.

It doesn't make sense in this era of returning power to the states to allow the Comptroller—an unelected regulator—to cancel state insurance regulation and force Congress to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to fill the void. The American people don't want or need another federal bureaucracy!

Congress can preserve this states' right by including a provision in a pending House financial services reform bill (H.R. 2520) that reaffirms and keeps insurance oversight power in the states' hands.

WHO CARES ABOUT STATES RIGHTS? WE DO AND SO DO CONSUMERS!

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 34 • MAY 13, 1996

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THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013), Vol. 1, Number 34, May 13, 1996. Published 50 times annually by News America Publishing Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10036. Second-Class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Send subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153. Yearly subscriptions, $79.96; Canadian, $99.96; foreign postage extra. Cover price, $2.95 ($3.50 Canadian). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, address changes, and subscription inquiries to: THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Customer Service, P.O. Box 710, Radnor, PA 19088-0710. If possible include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. For subscription customer service, call 1-800-983-7600. Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is (202) 293-4900. Advertising Production: call Natalie Harwood, (610) 293-8540. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 930, Radnor, PA 19088-0930. Copyright 1995, News America Publishing Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Publishing Incorporated.

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Ross Perot: Is He an Egomaniac?

Last week, David Frost gave us another glimpse into the psychology of Ross Perot. In an interview on PBS, Frost asked Perot, "What do you think are your flaws that you are aware of?"

Perot answered as follows: "Well, particularly where politics are concerned, I am results-oriented. . . . In politics, I am not an actor. I don't want to be an actor. . . . I write my own speeches. That's probably a flaw. You say, 'Boy, it's obvious, Ross.' Okay, but what you see is what you get. And I guess another flaw around politics is standing on principles. So I will stand on principle and fight for what I believe in. And that's a flaw. And again, if you come to a true flaw, it is very hard for me to suffer fools gladly. And that—you know, around politics you learn to just grin and expect to have it."

Frost zeroed in on the particular flaw in Perot's presentation. "You've listed five virtues rather than five flaws, in fact," Frost said. "All of those things are basically good for you that you've mentioned."

After some brief back and forth, Perot announced his biggest flaw: "Four years ago I didn't know that much about politics. I was shocked when I got close to it. Now, that's probably a flaw that I should have. I was just shocked at the total absence of any kind of ethics."

It is, of course, a common human weakness for people to mask their vanity in self-criticism: Self-promoters often tell you that their biggest problem is their generosity, or that they care too much. But it is vital for political figures to have even just a dollop of self-deprecation; without it, they become tyrants, if you see what we're getting at.

Toeing the Liberal Party Line

Nothing like a little objectivity from a press corps scornful of the idea that they lean leftward. On April 19, the Democratic National Committee's Communications Office faxed talking points to "interested parties" with the headline, "Bob Dole's Attacks On President Clinton's Judges: Playing Cynical Politics With The Issue Of Crime." The following day, columnist and TV commentator Al Hunt offered his "outrage" of the week on CNN's *Capital Gang*. His outrage: Bob Dole's attack on Clinton's judicial appointments. "Here are three salient facts," said Hunt. "One, independent studies suggest that Clinton's judicial appointments have been rather mainstream . . . two, Bob Dole has supported 98 percent of these appointments, and three, the presumptive Republican nominee is trailing in the polls and feverishly is looking for any helpful issue."

Al's outrage is rather similar to the DNC talking points. His "salient fact" #1 mirrors the sixth point on the DNC list, "President Clinton's Judges Are Moderate." which offers selected quotes to bolster their case that Clinton's not a judicial leftie.

"Salient facts" 2 and 3 track with DNC point 3: "Attack Is Poll Driven. Dole Is Attacking Judges He Voted To Confirm 98.4% Of The Time." The same DNC talking points Hunt parroted on national television also have a quote from a Hunt *Wall Street Journal* column attacking the GOP's relationship to the National Rifle Association. And why not? When you have a columnist "on message," surely you can take some time out to give him a pat on the back.

To Thine Own Crack Vial Be True

Mayor Marion Barry, the capital's longest-running social project, announced he was taking a week off to "work on me" at a farm in rural Maryland—"a very special place that was established to facilitate holistic, personal renewal for leaders and others who work under extremely stressful circumstances," according to the mayor (who then quickly hightailed it off to another "very special place" in St. Louis, which is marginally closer to the nation of Colombia than rural Maryland).

In a two-page statement, Barry averred, "The Bible says, 'To thine own self be true.'" Maybe Barry was high the day they read him the Good Book, so it falls to us to inform the mayor that those words are from Shakespeare. They are spoken by Polonius, of course, a meddlesome old fool.

Incidentally, throughout the Reagan years, "a shining city on a hill" was repeatedly attributed—by secular journalists and academics—to colonial governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts. But Winthrop's audience, of course, recognized the phrase and vision as from Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount.

To original sources, be true.

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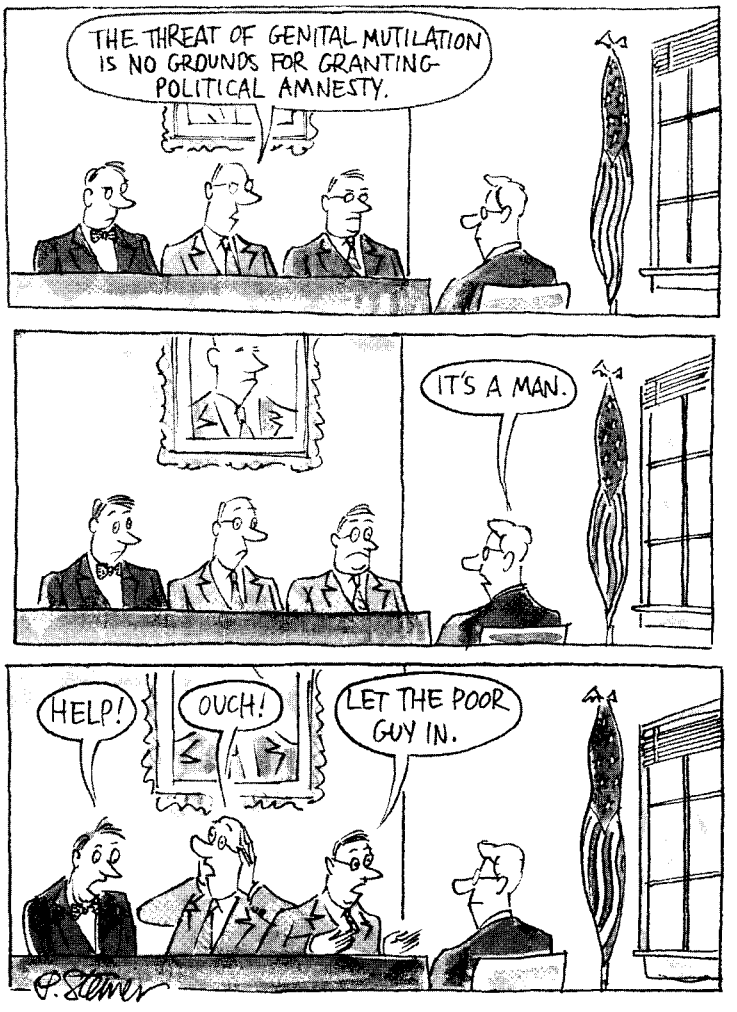
Scrapbook



Not Giving Credit Where It's Due

The *Wall Street Journal* published a remarkable story last week under the headline, "AIDS Fight Is Skewed By Federal Campaign Exaggerating Risks." What risks? Well, as reporters Amanda Bennett and Anita Sharpe explain, "for most heterosexuals, the risk from a single act of sex [is] smaller than the risk of ever getting hit by lightning."

The immensely long article, clearly intended for Pulitzer consideration, begins: "In the summer of 1987, federal health officials made the fateful decision to bombard the public with a terrifying message: Anyone could get AIDS." It's not every day, after all, that nine-year-old news makes the front page of a major newspaper.

The article is, to put it mildly, nothing new. In fact, some people knew about it at the time. Michael Fumento published a wildly controversial article in *Commentary* called "AIDS: Are Heterosexuals at Risk?"—which told exactly the same story the *Journal* tells now but was rather more timely when he wrote it. In November 1987.

The reason the *Journal* now splashes this old story across its pages is not that the reporters seem especially scandalized by the decision of the government to lie about AIDS back in 1987 (they sympathetically portray that act as a noble lie necessary to increase federal funding for AIDS research), but that they are scandalized by the consequences of the lie, as spelled out in the article's subhead: "Most Heterosexuals Face Scant Peril but Receive Large Portion of Funds: Less Goes to Gays, Addicts."

Fumento told this story with greater moral clarity and at a time when it might have done enormous good. As he put it in 1987: "Every dollar spent, every commercial made, every health warning released, that does not specify promiscuous anal intercourse and needle-sharing as the overwhelming risk factors in the transmission of AIDS is a lie, a waste of funds and energy, and a cruel diversion." Where was the *Journal* then? Spooked by the AIDS lobby, no doubt.

The Rental List

Fifty years ago, in 1946, the movies were at their high-water mark of popularity and influence: 90 million Americans went to a picture show every week, a number never duplicated before or since. It was a pretty good year for movies too. Herewith, some of the year's enduringly interesting ones:

The Best Years of Our Lives. Much celebrated at the time, subject of a brilliantly withering critique by seminal movie critic Robert Warshow, this collaboration between screenwriter Robert Sherwood and director William Wyler about three returning GIs stands the test of time—it's one of the best American movies, without question.

The Strange Love of Martha Ivers. "Whisper her name," went a famous radio campaign at the time for this spooky and atmospheric tale of small-town revenge with Kirk Douglas and a literate Robert Rossen screenplay.

It's a Wonderful Life. A box-office failure upon first release, it was allowed to slip into the public domain in the 1970s and, because it was free to all stations, became the most-shown Christmas movie on television. You can see why it didn't do well if you consider the subtext of this dark, beautiful film—it is a tale of disappointment, about a moody man who thinks he was handed a raw deal, and, even though he learns he has had a wonderful life, was sort of right the first time.

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Casual

The Final Score is: Indiana 0, Indiana 0

Remember *Hoosiers*? If you've seen the 1986 movie, you were probably charmed by the thinly fictionalized David-and-Goliath story about how one of the smallest high schools in the state of Indiana (Milan, enrollment 161) overcomes incredible odds to beat one of the largest (Muncie Central, enrollment 2,300) for the 1954 state basketball championship.

Since I grew up in Indiana passionately affected by what we natives call Hoosier hysteria and knew intimately the story of Bobby Plump's heroics in the 1954 tourney, I had a different reaction to *Hoosiers*. It sent me into a funk of sour resentment over the missed opportunity to launch a lucrative screenwriting career. How had I failed to see the big-screen potential of this legendary story?

I consoled myself with the thought that people tend to be blind to the universal appeal of their local customs. Did the peasants of Périgord appreciate the fungi that their pigs rooted up before the chefs of Paris sought them out as the finest truffles known to man? Maine lobster, so I've heard, was the 19th-century equivalent of soup-kitchen slop for the nearby indigent who couldn't afford real meat.

The success of *Hoosiers*, then, made clear to those of us who grew up in the middle of it something we had only halfway suspected. The enthralling spectacle of our state's high-school basketball tourney—in which every school from the smallest to the largest goes head to head—drives Hoosiers to hysteria not because we are uniquely susceptible to mass lunacy and have nothing else to do all winter long out in the cornfields (true, but beside the point). No, our championship *is* more dramatic than all the others.

Why? Because Indiana seemed to be the last state to withstand a national tsunami of misbegotten egalitarianism that believes in showering trophies down on every one of God's children and all His sports teams, too. Just for showing up. Most states divide their teams into different divisions by size of school—David fights David, and Goliath slugs Goliath. There are multiple state championships in team sports, one for each division. Everyone gets to be a "winner." This may be deeply satisfying if you're in the trophy-making and plaque-engraving business. But don't try to make a movie out of it.

Now it seems the egalitarian disease has afflicted the Hoosier state with all the subtlety of a mad-cow virus. Last week, the Indiana High School Athletic Association's governing board decided to junk the venerable tournament that nourished Hoosier hysteria. Barring a popular uprising, which is not out of the question, the state will go to a four-division, four-champion, small-school-self-esteem-fest starting with the 1997-98 season. The program will then fade into the well-deserved obscurity that high-school basketball enjoys everywhere else in the land.

The everyone-deserves-to-be-a-champion movement is more than a quarter-century old. Ridicule of its kissing cousin—the self-esteem movement—is fast becoming a species of conventional wisdom. It looks as if Indiana's tender-souled high-school sports politicians are rushing to destroy their meritocratic jewel of a basketball championship before it's too late. You can say this for the peasants of Périgord and the lobster fishermen of Maine: They at least had the wit to sell dear when the world came to buy. The basketball bureaucrats of Indiana have decided simply to sell out, and at low prices too.

They defend themselves, of course, by invoking, as the commissioner put it, "the best interests of the students we serve." They say also that, after all, there has only been one miracle team from Milan; that since 1954 no team so small has soared so high; that before 1954, small schools lost overwhelmingly, as they have ever since—year after year after year of unrelieved defeat—in the first round of tournament play.

I say one Milan redeems all that. Legendary exploits are rare things, indeed. And if they only come along once in a century—well, that is often enough for people to be inspired by them. What's more, it's a simpleton's view that adults best serve the interests of students by depriving them of the possibility of epic achievement in the belief that they are bound to fall short.

Indiana—and I say this with the affection of a native son—is a flat state filled with flat people. Hoosiers are not given to extravagance of expression or emotion. Until the month of March, that is. Then we lose all reserve, we scream, we hyperventilate, and we weep. It is an incomparable experience at a young age. It is a (benign) form of madness. It marks you for life. I say that merely as a fan, who couldn't jump or shoot well enough to make the team.

In a flat state, high school basketball was our Mount Everest, and most of us were doomed to be sherpas in the base camp. We didn't mind; truly we didn't. Do we really have to dynamite the mountain because so few reach the summit?

Richard Starr

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Here's One Civil Right Washington Ignores...

"No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

— U.S. Constitution, Amendment V

The language is clear enough. If government wants your land for good cause, they must pay for it. It's a simple case of equity...or so the Founding Fathers believed.

But unfortunately, not everyone agrees. Some extremists want to distort our laws to take private land in the name of environmental protection without providing a dime in compensation.

Landowners can lose their property and their livelihood to protect a rat or a drainage ditch and get nothing in return.

There's something more at stake here than just property. It's called principle.

The groups listed below represent millions of Americans in every state. We're calling on members of the Senate to defend a fundamental principle—the right to private property and just compensation. Private property rights and environmental protection are not incompatible—quite the contrary, in fact.

Support S.605, the "Omnibus Property Rights Act."
Let's protect the environment, but not at the expense of our Constitution.

Paid for by the American Property Rights Alliance

American Forest & Paper Association
American Homeowners Association
American Homeowners Foundation
International Council of Shopping Centers
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Realtors
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Federation of Independent Business
National Mining Association
The National Grange
National Water Resources Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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Conservative Dole Drums in '96

I am one Dole supporter who believes William Kristol should be commended for speaking out early in the campaign season ("A Dole Defeat and the Conservative Future," April 29). I found his concerns valid and did not find his article mean-spirited, contrary to what the media have reported.

While serving as a Bush political appointee in 1992, I, along with my colleagues, waited in vain for the Bush-Quayle campaign to swing into action. Since we were bound by the Hatch Act, we were unable to officially join the campaign. Many of our concerns were ignored by the campaign staff.

Unfortunately, the Bush campaign waited until it was too late to gear up, and Bill Clinton defeated a decent man. Kristol is speaking out now in an attempt to stop the reelection of Clinton. Thankfully, it is still early in the campaign season.

I hope that the Dole campaign knows that Kristol, Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, and Mary Matalin are not the enemy. The enemy is the media, unions, and the traditional liberal establishment.

The "Clinton coalition" of special-interest groups will stop at nothing to show that 1994 was a fluke for Republicans. Unfortunately, they are well on their way to winning the battle this November.

GERRY DICKINSON
MT. PLEASANT, SC

After devoting a whole day to electing Bob Dole delegates at my legislative district caucus, I tuned in this morning to *Face the Nation* to see and hear my candidate.

Boy, am I discouraged! The only substantive thing Dole said was knocking William Kristol for his article doubting that Dole would win against Clinton.

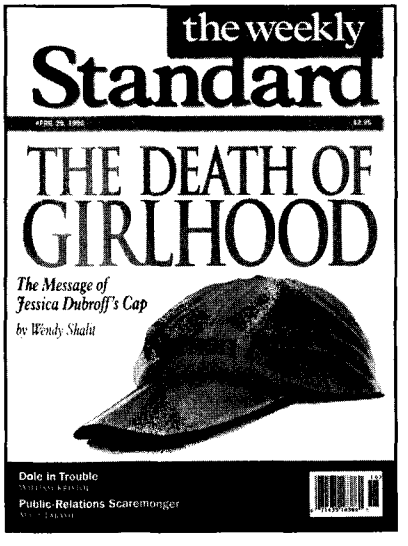
Dole ducked confronting the Republican cave-in on the minimum-wage increase. All he could do was mumble insider jargon and technicalities. Dole needs to turn over his Senate duties to someone else, figure out something to say, and start saying it—clearly and forcefully.

And, for God's sake, he needs to start saying "I think," not "Bob Dole thinks."

Meanwhile, on *Meet the Press*, crazy Ross Perot was speaking clearly and specifically and sounding like a statesman. Dole needs to get a clue, otherwise he doesn't stand a chance—and that's coming from one of his strongest supporters.

MARK CASSEL
WOODINVILLE, WA

William Kristol sounds like a Democratic pollster. Maybe he does not remember "President" Dukakis and his almost 20-point lead over Bush. Polls are always tilted toward liberals because most pollsters are liberal. I can take phone books with city maps



from any city and do a poll of depressed or poor neighbors and make the sample 90 percent liberal. No good American believes in polls. Remember Truman's "defeat" in 1948? I do.

BILL LUNSFORD
VALDOSTA, GA

Given the vulnerability of President Clinton on the issues, it is foolish to write off the candidacy of Bob Dole.

Clinton is vulnerable on the following issues: returning power to the states, welfare reform, the appointment of liberal judges, his support for racial preferences, the $500-per-child tax credit, and his veto of the bill banning partial-birth abortions.

On each of these issues, Dole's position is more popular than Clinton's. Furthermore, with the exception of the ban on partial-birth abortions, each issue fits into the general conservative theme of reducing the size and scope of the federal government.

By pressing Clinton on these issues, the character issue is raised automatically. Clinton promised a middle-class tax cut, but he broke his promise. He promised welfare reform, but this was only "boob bait for the bubbas." He said that he would "fix" racial preferences, while his Justice Department has been supporting them.

LANSING POLLOCK
BUFFALO, NY

William Kristol's arguments for rejecting "character" as an issue in the presidential campaign are unpersuasive. The fact is that for Republicans there's nothing else left.

The Republican Revolution? It is now abundantly clear that there isn't going to be one. The "Contract with America"? Shot down by the standard-bearer himself, who had the power to kill it but not the wit to invent something better. Policy differences? Compromised away by the putative candidate, who always "comes around." What else can we expect from a man who has spent his political lifetime ratifying and collecting taxes for the welfare state?

Kristol ought to be able to see what the Democrats understand perfectly well: Character is the only issue that can defeat them.

Why else would the Democrats be moving heaven and earth to squelch Kenneth Starr as well as any others who come forth with news and evidence that reinforce the public perception that Clinton is the most despicable person ever elected to the presidency? If there's an ounce of shame left in the electorate, they won't make the same mistake twice.

RICHARD D. BUTLER
GREENSBORO, NC

Although William Kristol's good purpose was clear, his article about keeping the conservative tide flowing could, without excessive stretching, be summarized as "Dole's defeat won't

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really be so bad for us conservatives." I disagree, although I believe such a defeat is unlikely to be fatal for the conservative cause.

Electing Dole to the presidency may turn out to be impossible. But we must still try. It is too early to console ourselves that the reelection of Bill Clinton will not be the loss of everything. We must act on the understanding that the failure of the Dole campaign will prolong a shameful tenure.

LAWRENCE H. O'NEILL
NEW YORK, NY

I agree with William Kristol that Dole's candidacy is fatally flawed. That having been said, does it not suggest that the process through which we select our candidates is also flawed? Dole has been in the Senate for a very long time. He became the Republican nominee almost because it was his turn, not because he displays any distinguishing traits.

There appears to be a lack of leadership among Republicans that condemns them to the legislature. Dole is a legislative leader, and by all accounts a very good one. But his position as Senate majority leader requires him to deal in the art of the possible, not in the achievement of lofty goals.

Dole is a tactician and must build consensus among individuals who are inclined to move in his general direction anyway. The Republican party desperately needs a leader, not a legislator. We need a strategist with a vision of the future who can inspire others to follow him.

Maybe there is such an individual among the young governors: Weld, Voinovich, Whitman, Engler, Edgar, Thompson, or maybe even Rowland. By 2000, any or all of these leaders will have the maturity and leadership credentials as successful governors to be credible candidates.

JOHN F. JOHNSON, JR.
FORT MEADE, MD

CLINTON'S VERY REAL GRIEF

Andrew Ferguson's use of the tragedy of Ron Brown's death to attack President Clinton ("The Interminable Grief of President Clinton," April 22) is not only offensive, but disrespectful of the memory of all of the victims of the April 3 plane crash in Croatia.

Ferguson's account of that week (which he tastelessly labels "Brownfest") isn't even accurate. The president did not visit the Commerce Department twice, but only once, on the day of the crash. The president did not, as Ferguson reports, begin hugging everyone after his speech to Commerce employees. He simply walked off the stage, with the rest of the cabinet following behind him.

At Dover, the president spoke of the lives and deaths of the 33 American crash victims as "a stern rebuke to the cynicism that is all too familiar today" in the United States. I can imagine no clearer example of such cynicism than the commentary of Andrew Ferguson that you chose to publish.

WILLIAM W. GINSBERG
CHIEF OF STAFF
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WASHINGTON, DC

THE DEATH OF GIRLHOOD

I found Wendy Shalit's essay "The Death of Girlhood" (April 29) very interesting. It seems that society does not allow children the age of innocence anymore. Children may need pushing to stay on track, but not to the extremes Jessica was pushed.

It's nothing new for parents to have dreams for their children. But it is hard to picture that Jessica's parents cared about her. It seems that their only objective was to garner notoriety and publicity. Jessica's parents are guilty of the ultimate form of child abuse.

JO M. OLCHAWA
COLTON, CA

Wendy Shalit's beautiful essay is indeed a moving tribute to the fleeting life of little Jessica Dubroff. I hope it will mark an end to the current *Zeitgeist* as concerns childhood and womanhood.

Shalit helped clarify the true background resulting in Jessica's death, as well as the magnitude of the distorted thinking of her parents, and much of the public. Little Jessica should have had the opportunity to grow up.

NANCY JANCOURTZ
EASTCHESTER, NY

I left Wendy Shalit's essay with profound disgust. By Shalit's own account, seven-year-old Jessica Dubroff "was trying to become what her daddy and mommy wanted her to become: the youngest pilot ever to complete a cross-country flight." And, as Shalit notes, "someone slapped a 'Women Fly' cap on little Jessica [and] she innocently waved at the camera."

From these facts, Shalit pans to an artist who photographed her daughter nude from infancy and then to the "shared oppression" that leads a "women's-lib theorist" to say that "we will be unable to speak of the liberation of women without also discussing the liberation of children." We learn that the underlying cause of young Jessica's death was not her parents' craze for stardom and a flight instructor's error in judgment, but rather the women's liberation movement.

There are many excesses for which feminism should be called to task. However it is as unbecoming of Shalit, as it is for those she would condemn in the media and the arts, to score ideological points off the body of a seven-year-old.

STEVEN J. EAGLE
VIENNA, VA

WENDY SHALIT RESPONDS: ***The conventional wisdom that one "shouldn't generalize from tragedies" has long puzzled me. It is precisely because an event is so heartbreaking—and we do not want it to happen again—that we must force ourselves to scrutinize everything that led up to it. Ideas do have consequences, and if those sympathetic to the ideas are ashamed of the consequences, why don't they admit it instead of attacking the messenger?***

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Privatization—the key to welfare reform

All social programs were born originally out of good intentions to handle some obvious need. The invariable problem is abuse of the programs. Government's solution has been typical all-or-nothing regulation. Food stamps were intended to ensure nobody starved. But the system merely created a new form of quasicurrency, bought and sold on a growing black market. Typical government solution? Eliminate the program.

Privatizing feeds people *and* reduces corruption.

Reform of the food stamp program *can* be accomplished without forsaking the original intention. Instead of creating a quasicurrency redeemable for anything — including beer and cigarettes — let food manufacturers bid to provide the basic necessities. Bakers with the lowest bread bid issue bread coupons. The coupon has no face value; it's only good for a loaf of that baker's bread. The store would be able to redeem the coupon only with the distributor, ending the cash black market. Only the bakers need be audited, to ensure they delivered the bread for the coupons issued; the government would pay the bid amount.

Such a system eliminates fraud, black-market brokering, and encourages competition. Even more importantly, the recipients would be able to use the coupons only for specific products, ensuring healthy, nutritional foods for the family, a return to the original intention.

Free enterprise programs work in the real world.

Far too often government attempts wonderful social programs totally disregarding basic human nature: People will break the system. When corruption becomes too great, the truly needy are harmed by those who exploit the system for a quick profit.

The key to designing a good program, including taxation, is to ask, simply: "How could one circumvent this?" Government lives in a dream world where static models are employed because they argue nobody can forecast the future. But that static world assumes no change. In effect, government guarantees every program will fail in its goal. In the end a corrupt system merely brings down the house. The reciprocal is also true: The closer you get to free enterprise, the harder the circumvention and the stronger the program.

It is time reality wins over idealistic theory. If we cannot deal with corruption in an honest way, worthwhile intentions will be thwarted. That leaves us with only a system of death and taxes.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

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the weekly Standard

General Clinton, Losing the Drug War

Bill Clinton is mostly talk. He enjoys daily political combat and negotiates its demands with rare talent. But he has never been much for actual, week-in, week-out government. Over any given administrative term in his long career, the Clinton record is thickly stained with the evidence both of his personal disengagement and of the ideological inclinations of his loosely supervised appointees. So the early months of a Clinton election year always look the same: He mounts a slick and furious propaganda offensive to muddy that evidence, the better to confuse and silence his opponents. What looks bad, Clinton knows, can often be made to look good—if you jabber about it enough.

This is your president's brain. And this is your president's brain on drugs: Clinton is justifiably nervous that his credibility gap in the nation's drug war—still a major public preoccupation—might be exploited by Republicans in the fall.

Candidate Clinton didn't inhale. President Clinton's surgeon general, Joycelyn Elders, made repeated pronouncements on the virtues of drug legalization. Before the ink was dry on his presidential oath, Clinton gutted the White House drug office with a two-fold, shabby purpose: satisfying a campaign pledge to trim his staff, and purging a hundred-odd career civil servants whose only sin (shades of Travelgate) was to have worked under a Republican administration. That massacre remains the president's best known drug-war initiative; three years later, he has spent very little time on the effort. "I've been in Congress for over two decades," Democratic Rep. Charles B. Rangel grumped late last year. "I have never, never, never seen a president who cares less" about drugs.

THE CLINTON CAMPAIGN HAS EMBARKED ON A WEEKS-LONG MEDIA TOUR TO PORTRAY THE PRESIDENT AS FULLY ENGAGED IN THE WAR ON DRUGS. IT IS HOKUM.

So it is now, predictably, "inoculation" season, as the Clinton campaign embarks on a weeks-long media tour designed to portray the president as fully and effectively engaged in the war on drugs. Much of it is typical hokum. A talk-show schlockmeister has been recruited to produce anti-drug television commercials; "Montel Williams's leadership on this crucial effort is inspiring," burbles the White House. A Gallup poll on the drug war has been commissioned, as the White House admits without embarrassment, "to demonstrate thinking which will support our efforts." And the president himself—in a spare Miami moment between rounds of golf and multimillion-dollar Democratic fundraisers—has unveiled a "new" drug-fighting strategy. He is "working hard in Washington," he tells a group of network cameramen and middle-school students. And his work is paying off, since "every year for the last three years . . . drug use has dropped."

We'll come back to this falsehood in a moment. Were the Clinton drug-fighting record purely a matter of Elders-like bloopers and mere inattention, the president's current show of concern—and the debut of his newly minted tough-guy "drug czar," retired army general Barry McCaffrey—might be sufficient protection against GOP election-year complaints. But it really isn't true that Clinton has done "nothing" about drugs, as Republicans may want to charge. It's worse, far worse: His administration has engineered the most significant redirection of federal drug policy in several decades. This is a poorly reported story. And an alarming one that begs for informative political debate.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the federal

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government pursued what might fairly be described as a "do everything" strategy against illegal drugs. Executive-branch agencies conducted crop eradication and criminal investigative efforts in foreign countries. They launched "interdiction" programs against smugglers operating in the so-called transit zone between those countries and the United States, and on our borders. They undertook a dizzying variety of law-enforcement, drug-prevention, and rehabilitative-treatment initiatives here at home. It was a richly funded campaign; total federal spending on the drug war rose nearly 700 percent between 1981 and 1992. And it roughly coincided with a more than 50 percent decline in the rate of overall drug use nationwide, from its historical high in 1979 to its subsequent low in the final year of the Bush administration.

There was a standard Democratic critique of government drug policy during this period of Republican presidencies: The executive branch was supposedly placing exaggerated emphasis on efforts to reduce the supply of illegal drugs to American neighborhoods, and short-changing an equally necessary therapeutic approach to addicts and schoolchildren. The drug war's most visibly warlike aspects—its overseas and interdiction programs—were subjected to particular scorn. As the Customs Service was spending millions of dollars to get radar balloons tangled in high-tension electrical wires on the Southwest border, the scoffers said, cocaine addicts went homeless and died for want of bed-space in federally funded treatment facilities.

THE PRESIDENT WAS SADLY MISTAKEN WHEN HE TOLD THOSE MIAMI SCHOOLCHILDREN THAT DRUG USE HAS DROPPED EVERY YEAR SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE.

Of course, it is a simple fact that federal law can only be enforced by the federal government, and that effort—G-men and prisons, most obviously—is intrinsically more expensive than even the most lavish education and drug-treatment programs could ever be. And so the federal drug budget will *always* be heavily weighted toward "supply reduction" (and away from "demand reduction") activities. Even in a Democratic administration. President Clinton still spends twice as much money on restricting drug supply as on ending demand.

But he is spending it very differently. Democratic hostility to drug-war "militarism" is alive and well in the Clinton administration. Under his supervision, the federal government is now conducting an anti-drug effort almost exclusively *inside* the United States. At our borders and beyond, the drug war has, for the most part, been cancelled. By formal White House directive.

In 1993, the administration instituted what is technically called a "controlled shift" of federal drug-war assets. Money and personnel devoted to anti-smuggling efforts in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and on the U.S.-Mexican border were ostensibly redeployed directly to the Latin American countries in which most illegal drugs originate. But that redeployment has never actually occurred. The federal drug-budget accounts from which any new Latin American initiative could be funded are 55 percent *smaller* today than in 1992. The old-fashioned anti-smuggling effort has been "shifted" to nowhere. It has been eviscerated.

The result? Coast Guard cocaine and marijuana seizures are down 45 and 90 percent, respectively, since 1991. In 1994, the Customs Service let two million commercial trucks pass through three of the busiest ports-of-entry on the Mexican border without seizing a single kilogram of cocaine. Between 1993 and early 1995, the estimated smuggling "disruption rate" achieved by federal drug interdiction agencies fell 53 percent—the equivalent of 84 more metric tons of cocaine and marijuana arriving unimpeded in the United States each year. Drug Enforcement Agency figures suggest that cocaine and heroin are now available on American streets in near-record purity—and at near-record-low retail prices.

Which can only be evidence that the supply of illegal drugs on American streets has significantly expanded on Bill Clinton's watch. Because the only other possible explanation, that the demand for drugs has *fallen*, is at variance with the facts. The president was sadly mistaken—or, well, he lied—when he told those Miami schoolchildren that American drug use "has dropped" every year since he took office. Drug use has steadily *risen* since 1992, especially among the young. Overall teenage drug use is up 55 percent. Marijuana consumption by teenagers has almost doubled.

This is a pretty striking picture of deliberate government decision-making gone disastrously awry. It's the president's fault. He has proposed nothing to correct it, Gen. McCaffrey and Montel Williams notwithstanding. And he should be called to account. All the president's facile election-year speechifying aside, there are serious differences of personnel and policy that divide this Democratic administration from the Republican administration that would replace it in 1997. Where the drug war is concerned, as in so many other respects, those differences should be clear. They do not flatter President Clinton.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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KENNEDY-KASSEBOMB

by Fred Barnes

FOR ONCE, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE'S strategy of running his presidential campaign from the Senate floor may produce a political benefit rather than an embarrassment. By insisting on medical savings accounts as part of health care reform, Dole has put President Clinton and congressional Democrats in a political bind. If they block MSAs—they've talked about a veto or a filibuster—they'll get no bill at all and lose the reforms they want, portability of health insurance and its availability to folks with pre-existing medical conditions. Worse, they may be blamed for killing health care reform altogether this year. Should they go along with MSAs, they'll escape blame, but then the bill will have a distinct Republican cast and Clinton won't get much credit for enacting it.

Dole's maneuver hasn't worked yet. Its success depends chiefly on his willingness to stay firmly behind MSAs, which are popular with conservatives, the business community, and consumers. If he caves, Dole and Republicans, not Clinton and Democrats, will face a political dilemma. If GOP members bottle up legislation because it lacks MSAs, they'll be pilloried for blocking health care reform. But if they approve an MSA-less bill, they're not much better off. The bill will have Clinton's stamp. Indeed, it will be exactly what he asked for in his State of the Union address in January.

Michael Ramirez

Despite his reputation as a compromiser, Dole appears strongly committed to MSAs, which allow patients more choice in health care. MSAs let patients use tax-deductible savings or employer contributions for routine medical expenses, and catastrophic health insurance to cover major illnesses. Unused savings could be rolled over for later use or pocketed as income (though without a tax break), thus giving patients an incentive to be cost-conscious. "We're playing more hardball on this than I've ever seen," says a Dole aide. "Dole's core principle is that we're going to have meaningful MSAs, not a watered-down version."

The senator sought to add MSAs to the reform bill, but five Republicans defected, including the bill's co-sponsor, Sen. Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, and the MSA amendment lost 52-46. The bill then passed the Senate 100-0. MSAs were included, however, in the House version, and Dole said he would insist on including them in the final measure to be fashioned by a Senate-House conference.

Dole was furious at Kassebaum. He signaled this by denying her the right to select GOP senators for the conference. Purely out of pique, Dole, Senate majority whip Trent Lott, and other Republicans also delivered a payback by voting for a provision mandating that insurance policies pay for care of mental illness as readily as for treatment of physical sickness. It passed, 68-30, to the surprise of its sponsor, GOP senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico. Kassebaum and her Democratic co-sponsor, Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, had pleaded for a clean bill with no amendments.

The mental health mandate prompted loud protests from business groups, which said it would increase health insurance costs up to $15 billion annually. Dole conceded it was too expensive and said he hoped to scuttle it in the final Senate-House bill. But the mandate generated considerable backing—Tipper Gore published an op-ed in the *Washington Post* endorsing it—and Dole may have to allow a scaled-back version of it.

MSAs are likely to affect insurance premiums far less than mental health, but they've generated more controversy. For Democratic leaders, opposing them has become a matter of theology: Since Dole and Republicans want them so badly, MSAs must be awful. Not only are MSAs "a multi-billion dollar tax break

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for the wealthy and the healthy," they're part of a Republican plot to destroy Medicare, Kennedy fumed on May 1. "This proposal is a foot in the door for the right-wing's anti-Medicare agenda—and it has no place in genuine insurance reform." Before Republicans appropriated MSAs as their issue, however, Democrats thought they had an important place. Senate minority leader Tom Daschle and House minority leader Dick Gephardt both endorsed MSAs, for the understandable reason that middle-class Americans like them, especially the first-dollar coverage of visits to doctors.

Democratic criticism has made Republicans all the more adamant about MSAs. Chairman Bill Archer of the House Ways and Means Committee said he won't sign a bill from the House-Senate conference that doesn't have MSAs. "Who could argue against providing additional options and flexibility?" Dole asked. "The answer is the same people who thought that the best way to reform the health care system was to hand it over to the federal government to impose more mandates and government controls."

For now, the narrow issue is which senators will be appointed to the conference. Dole says Republicans must have three more than Democrats because Kassebaum will side with Democrats against MSAs. Kennedy counters that Democrats won't agree to an arrangement insuring approval of MSAs. There the issue stands, with Democrats declining to name conferees.

Dole believes Democrats are bluffing. His allies point to the case of Democratic representative James Moran of Virginia, who railed against MSAs on the House floor, then voted for a health care bill that included them. Dole figures Democrats want to knock out MSAs at this stage to avoid having to filibuster the health insurance reform to death or force Clinton to veto it. If these are their options, Democrats and Clinton are in an "impossible position," says a GOP aide. In the end, Dole believes Clinton will never veto health care reform, MSAs or not.

But again, success depends on Dole's fortitude. Kennedy is eager to confer with Dole and get him to settle for a small demonstration project for MSAs. Republican senator Don Nickles of Oklahoma, a Dole protégé, has talked to Kassebaum about a deal in which MSAs might be authorized for only a few years. Dole isn't buying. A diluted MSA provision, says a Dole associate, "wouldn't be a hollow victory. It would be a defeat." And Dole can't afford another. ♦

Clinton's Morning

by Karlyn Bowman and Irwin M. Stelzer

Bill Clinton has a problem. Should he take the advice of his treasury secretary and declare that it is morning in America, 1996? Or should he listen to his labor secretary and offer to share the pain Americans are supposedly feeling from corporate downsizing and global competition?

Bob Dole has a problem. Should he tell voters that the economy is in a mess that only a Republican administration, a truly balanced budget, and an honestly downsized government can correct? Or should he acknowledge the economy's gains, claim some of the credit for his own efforts to force Clinton toward a balanced budget, and promise an even brighter morning in America if they entrust him with the chore of cutting the size of government and reducing taxes? Or should he avoid making the economy the major battleground of the campaign on the assumption that most voters are at least as, and perhaps more, concerned about other things this year?

THE ECONOMY IS IN SURPRISINGLY GOOD SHAPE, DESPITE WHAT POLITICIANS AND PUNDITS ARE SAYING.

Both men are trying to appeal to an electorate whose views on the economy and their own futures differ in surprising ways from current conventional opinion. Poll data suggest that voters don't seem terribly worried about their economic futures these days, and economic data suggest their moderately good cheer is entirely sensible.

Most Americans today are rather positive about the economy. In a December *New York Times* poll, while only 4 percent described the "condition of the national economy these days" as very good, fully 47 percent called it "fairly good." Thirty-three percent said the economy was in fairly bad shape, and 13 percent very bad. The poll appeared with the paper's exceedingly long seven-part series on economic insecurity in America, and the results weren't exactly a perfect statistical backdrop for

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the series's much-discussed gloom and doom. Indeed, it suggests that Americans are, if anything, feeling *better* about the economy than they did in 1992, when more than twice as many described the economy as very bad. More recent polling from the Gallup organization reinforces these findings—only 20 percent describe the economy as poor, down from 48 percent four years earlier.

Since late 1995, strong pluralities or majorities have told pollsters they are better off than they were when Bill Clinton became president; in the April Gallup poll, 47 percent said the nation's economy is in better shape now than in 1992 and 18 percent that it is in the same condition. Taken together, that is 65 percent, twice as many as those who think the economy has gotten worse.

People are also confident about their own economic situations. In the March NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, 73 percent were satisfied with their job security. Wirthlin Worldwide recently reported that 50 percent of those polled described themselves as "very secure" and said they thought they would "have a job" at their current place of employ as long as they wanted. Thirty-four percent described themselves as "somewhat secure" and would "probably have a job" at the same place for the "next five years." Ten percent were "somewhat insecure" and expect either to lose their job in the next five years or be given one "that pays less," while 6 percent called themselves "very insecure" and doubted they would keep their job in the coming few years. Add up all these numbers and it turns out 84 percent of supposedly insecure Americans are looking ahead with confidence to secure employment until 2001 at least.

These numbers haven't changed very much over the years. Since 1975, Gallup has asked people to think about the next 12 months and how likely it is that they will "lose [their] job or be laid off." The most anxious Americans have ever been on this score was in 1982, when roughly 20 percent said a firing or layoff was very or fairly likely. Today, 14 percent say so—a third fewer than in 1982. In March, only 7 percent told ABC News/*Washington Post* pollsters that they thought a firing or layoff very likely, 15 percent said somewhat likely, 19 percent said this was somewhat unlikely, and 57 percent very unlikely. The 22 percent who can be counted as worriers—those who think it very or somewhat likely that they will find themselves on the unemployment line in the next year—is roughly in line with the number who have had such concerns in the past.

If Americans are actually feeling more secure than many politicians are suggesting, they have good reason: All the talk of downsizing can't change the fact that the economy is providing jobs for virtually all who want them. With unemployment at about 5.5 percent (3.3 percent for men with a spouse present), we are more in danger of running into shortages of workers than into shortages of jobs. And the new jobs are preponderantly good ones; a recently released study by the president's Council of Economic Advisers shows that more than two-thirds of the 8.5 million net new full-time jobs added in the past few years are in industries or occupations that pay above-average wages. "Employment in 'hamburger-flipping' jobs actually fell between 1994 and 1995," proudly proclaim the president's economists (although just what is wrong with such entry-level jobs is nowhere stated).

Nor is employment more unstable these days than in decades past. Job tenure—the average time a worker has been at his or her present post—hasn't changed much in over 20 years. Men surveyed by the Labor Department had held the same job for 4.6 years in 1973, and for 5.1 years in 1991, the last year for which comprehensive data are available. And women, now that they have made a fuller commitment to paid work, have seen their average job tenure increase from 2.8 years to 3.8 years over that same time. The one cloud on the horizon is that the average job tenure of uneducated men has shortened slightly, surely one of the reasons that a greater number of high school graduates are choosing to get a higher education.

None of this is to deny that some Americans are having difficulties. A majority of those who do have steady jobs say they are working harder and earning less these days. According to Gallup, nearly 60 percent know someone who has lost a job, which is certainly a new fact of life for most white-collar workers. Those whose jobs do simply disappear often have trouble finding new employment at the same salary level. And it is undeniable that Americans in the bottom 40 percent aren't living lives of luxury—while at the same time those in the top fifth are earning more and more.

But those at the bottom are not sinking. In fact, their incomes have just about kept pace with inflation. More important, they rarely stay at the bottom very long. In 1968 the University of Michigan began tracking over 50,000 individuals of all ages and income brackets. Only 5 percent of those in the bottom fifth of all earners in 1975 were still in that bracket in 1991; 80 percent had made it into the middle class, and 29 percent into the top fifth. Students, immigrants, people temporarily down on their luck, and ordinary workers (particularly those with college educations) are continually moving up the ladder. Those in the bottom fifth in 1975 increased their annual incomes by an infla-

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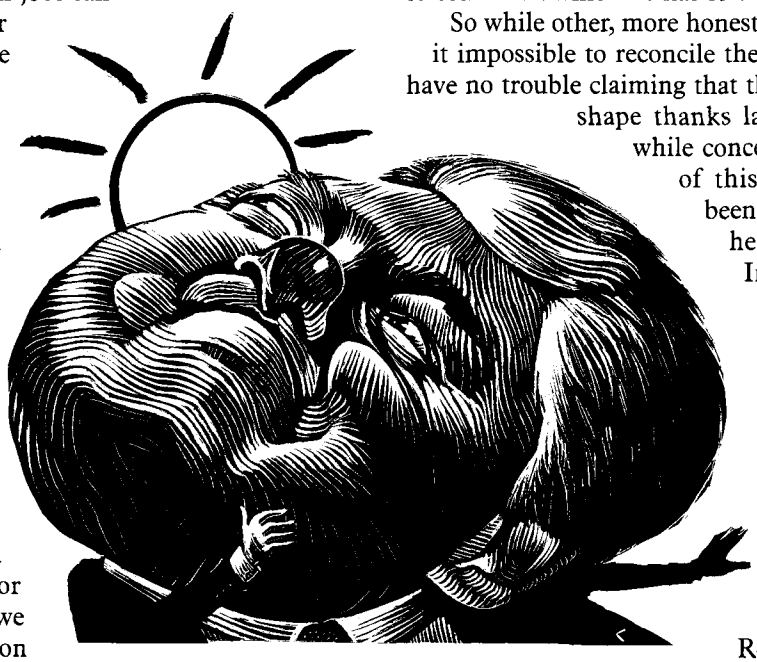
tion-adjusted $25,322 in the 16-year span covered by the Michigan study.

Polling data show Americans are not especially insecure. Jobs data show they have little reason to fear being out of work or being shunted from job to job. Income data show most Americans have it within their power to move up what was once called "the ladder of success." And Americans are not behaving as though they are worried about the state of their finances. The economist Herbert Stein points out that people change their behavior when they are really worried about something. People who are really worried about their health cut down on their smoking and drinking. People really worried about crime lock their doors and install security systems. And people who are feeling insecure in their jobs can be expected to save for the rainy day they are expecting. But Americans continue to buy cars in record numbers—more households now have three cars than have none. They continue to buy new houses and furniture and to incur debt. Unless we have all gone mad and are engaged in a frenzied last fling before our economic world collapses, our behavior belies the notion that we are collectively a nation in terror. After all, someone who thinks he is going to lose his job doesn't dash out to buy a car—or even a new couch.



Kevin Chadwick

The image of a populace overcome with fear of the future seems due less to the facts than to a combination of media hype and ideological opportunism on the part of politicians eager to carve out a bigger role for government. The idea suits those, like labor secretary Robert Reich, who are perpetually searching for an excuse to enact new government programs—the very same programs they were proposing long before they ever discovered such a thing as middle-class insecurity.

And yet Americans are indeed experiencing anxiety and insecurity. But not about the economy. They are concerned about the moral and spiritual well-being of the nation. Americans are concerned, as Michael J. Sandel points out in his new book *Democracy's Discontent* that "from family to neighborhood to nation, the moral fabric of community is unraveling around us." Does the United States have what it will take to compete with Southeast Asian nations, deal with the problems of the cities, address the breakdown of families, restore civility to everyday life?

If politicians concentrate only on the economy, they will be missing a great deal of what ails the body politic. People worry about their pocketbooks, of course. But the sources of what is taken to be their "economic anxiety" are only partly economic.

Which brings us back to the conflicting advice being received by the president from Reich on the one hand and treasury secretary Bob Rubin on the other. Clinton is skilled at walking both sides of most of the streets down which he has strolled in his political life.

So while other, more honest politicians might find it impossible to reconcile the two, he will probably have no trouble claiming that the economy is in solid shape thanks largely to his policies, while conceding that the benefits of this prosperity have not been shared as equitably as he would have wished. In short, he will take credit for the voters' gain but share any pain they may feel.

Where does this leave Bob Dole? He can hardly claim credit for the current full-employment, low-inflation economy, even though the Republicans have contributed to that salutary condition by fighting to keep taxes and government spending down. But he can argue that the economy can grow far more quickly than it is now, a view increasingly popular on both the left (Felix Rohatyn) and the right (Robert Novak). He can remind voters that the GOP is the party of smaller government, which has both economic resonance (low taxes) and moral resonance (welfare reform). The relatively high personal esteem in which he is held should provide him a base of moral authority from which to talk about the deterioration of the social fabric. But can he can articulate, much less conceive, a message of national civic renewal?

Karlyn Bowman is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where Irwin M. Stelzer is director of regulatory policy studies.

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Two Gentlemen of Venona

by John E. Haynes and Harvey Klehr

The list of 20th-century American political martyrs usually includes the names of Harry Dexter White and Laurence Duggan. Did paranoid anti-Communists drive these two supposedly loyal and dedicated public servants to their deaths? The newly released cache of Soviet intelligence documents known by the code-name "Venona" demonstrates yet again that the anti-Communists were right all along—and that the indefatigable efforts of the Left to discredit the idea that Soviet spies were working in high-ranking positions in the U.S. government have now been thoroughly discredited by the testimony of Soviet intelligence itself.

Harry Dexter White was one of the most influential officials in New Deal Washington. He rose to the position of assistant secretary of the treasury and, in 1946, became director of the International Monetary Fund. He has been credited as the chief architect of the Bretton Woods monetary agreement, and the World Bank. It was, then, a shock when admitted Communist spy Elizabeth Bentley publicly accused White of espionage in 1948, finding support for her accusation in the testimony of fellow one-time Soviet spy Whittaker Chambers.

THE APOLOGISTS WERE WRONG—HARRY DEXTER WHITE AND LAURENCE DUGGAN WERE GUILTY.

Bentley and Chambers made their claims to the House Un-American Activities Committee. White came before the committee on August 13, 1948, and emphatically denied ever having any contact with Soviet intelligence. Given White's prominence, the impact of these charges could easily have been greater than in the Alger Hiss case.

But three days after testifying he died of a heart attack—a victim of HUAC, according to then-presidential candidate Henry Wallace, who said that he had planned to make White secretary of the treasury in a Wallace administration.

The controversy turned highly partisan when Herbert Brownell, President Eisenhower's attorney general, charged in 1953 that President Truman had appointed White to head the IMF despite FBI concerns about a possible Soviet link. A furious Truman replied that he had never seen an FBI report about its suspicions regarding White before the IMF appointment.

When the FBI produced copies of its warnings, Truman changed his story. He had appointed White to the IMF, he said, to get him out of the Treasury Department and allow the FBI the opportunity to gather more conclusive evidence. A HUAC threat to subpoena Truman died down only when Eisenhower said he thought it inappropriate to force a former president to testify.

The Venona papers —cables between Soviet intelligence officers that were intercepted and decoded during World War II—establish conclusively that Harry Dexter White lied and that Bentley and Chambers told the truth. White betrayed the United States. Eleven separate Venona cables confirm White's cooperation with Soviet intelligence.

White's code-name was "Jurist" (Alger Hiss's, also revealed in the Venona papers, was "Ales"). In an August 1944 cable, Soviet intelligence officers reported on a meeting with White: "As regards the technique of further work with us Jurist said that his wife was ready for any self-sacrifice; he himself did not think about his personal security, but a compromise would lead to a political scandal and the discredit of all supporters of the new course, therefore he would have to be very cautious."

The phrase "supporters of the new course" referred to those Americans who advocated a postwar alliance with the Soviet Union. Other cables show White reporting to the Soviets about discussions within the U.S. government about a number of sensitive matters: a postwar loan to the Soviet Union, reparations policy toward Germany, the dispute with the U.S.S.R. over who would rule postwar Poland, and the U.S. stand toward Stalin's annexation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. In a November 1944 cable, Moscow learned that White faced the monetary strain of financing a daughter's college expenses on a civil servant's salary. In order to ensure he was not tempted to leave government service for a more lucrative private-sector job, a Soviet intelligence officer assured White that the Soviet intelligence service would take care of his daughter's educational expenses. The cable noted that White had previously declined a regular subsidy from the Soviets but seemed amenable to a gift for these special expenses.

And what of Laurence Duggan? He is yet another "martyr," whose life was supposedly dashed on the shoals of anti-Communist paranoia. A professional diplomat, Duggan in 1935 became head of the State Department's Latin America division, resigning in 1944 for unspecified personal reasons. He became diplomatic adviser to the United Nations Relief and

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Rehabilitation Administration and, later, president of the Institute for International Education.

In 1948 Chambers told the FBI that, in the 1930s, his network of Soviet sources had tabbed Duggan as a Communist sympathizer. When approached to spy, however, Duggan told the recruiter that he was already working for another Soviet espionage network. Hede Massing, another defector from Soviet intelligence, confirmed Chambers's story—she had, she said, personally recruited Duggan and he was working for her network when approached by Chambers's emissary.

When the FBI interviewed Duggan in December 1948, he denied having spied for the Soviet Union, but his account was not a complete refutation of what Chambers and Massing had said. Duggan told the FBI that on two occasions in the mid-1930s friends had attempted to recruit him for Communist intelligence operations. He insisted that he had rejected the approaches but admitted that he had not reported the attempts either to his superiors at the State Department or to the FBI. Ten days after the interview, he either jumped or fell to his death from his 16th-floor office window.

A few days later, a tasteless remark by Rep. Karl Mundt (asked when HUAC would name suspected Soviet spies, he responded, "We'll name them as they jump out of windows") incurred the wrath of the liberal establishment. Duggan's many prominent friends (Sumner Welles, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the journalist Drew Pearson, among others) fervently defended his reputation. President Truman's attorney general, Tom Clark, called Duggan "a loyal employee of the United States Government." And Henry Wallace, who apparently loved to think about how he would have staffed his administration, said he would have considered Duggan for the post of secretary of state had he been elected president.

The image of Duggan as a loyal public servant driven to suicide by baseless accusations has been commonly accepted. His story is often presented as evidence that anti-communism itself constituted a form of psychological terror. So nightmarish were the times, we are told in history after history, that an innocent man chose suicide rather than try to save his reputation. This view was expressed as recently as last year by the unimpeachably anti-Communist Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. In an otherwise generous review of our book, *The Secret World of American Communism*, Schlesinger took harsh exception to a reference to Duggan: "Without supporting evidence, the Yale University Press should not have permitted this book to blacken the name of a man whom many knew as an able public servant."

Yale University Press can breathe a sigh of relief, for eight of the recently released Venona decryptions mention Laurence Duggan, code-named "Frank." These 1943 and 1944 cables show Duggan reporting to Soviet intelligence officers about Anglo-American plans for the invasion of Italy, consideration of an Anglo-American invasion of Nazi-occupied Norway, U.S. diplomatic approaches to Argentina's military government, and secret Anglo-American discussions regarding a common policy toward Middle Eastern oil resources.

In a July 22, 1944, cable, Soviet intelligence officers reported the resignation of their source "Frank" from the State Department. Duggan had officially resigned on July 18, possibly because of an internecine battle between Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Undersecretary Sumner Welles. The cable glossed over the loss of so valuable an asset by assuring Moscow that "prospects for the future are being looked into." In a November 1944 cable, Moscow was told that Hull's imminent departure from the State Department could lead to Duggan's reinstatement in "a leading post." The hope was based on the rumor, reported in this same cable, that President Roosevelt might make Henry Wallace secretary of state as consolation for having been dropped as vice president in favor of Harry Truman. And even if Wallace did not get the State Department, the cable continued, Duggan could still be useful to the Soviets by "using his friendship" with Wallace for "extracting . . . interesting information" that would inevitably come to someone of Wallace's standing. (Hull resigned at the end of November, but FDR appointed Wallace secretary of commerce, not state.)

The Venona documents suggest a few simple explanations for Duggan's suicide: remorse; despair that the jig was up; or the prospect that his betrayal of the United States and deception of his friends was about to be revealed.

It is true that overzealous or irresponsible anti-Communists did unjustly accuse innocent public servants of Communist links in the late 1940s and early 1950s. But the claim that the congressional committees investigating Communist infiltration into the U.S. government were engaging in witch hunts can no longer be sustained. Witches don't exist; Communist spies did. What these long-secret government archives now make manifest is that most of those accused by Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers and pilloried by HUAC were Soviet agents. Harry Dexter White and Laurence Duggan were not martyrs. They were among the most important American officials ever to betray their country.

John E. Haynes is author of* Red Scare or Red Menace? *Harvey Klehr is author (with Ronald Radosh) of* The Amerasia Spy Case. *This is their third piece for* THE WEEKLY STANDARD *on the Venona papers.

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Clinton's Touchy-Feely Foreign Policy

By Jeffrey Gedmin

The Center for Attitudinal Healing "pursues healing and development at a personal, social, and spiritual level." The Center's work "empowers a deeply shared experience from which an enduring sense of community can grow." "Choose peace rather than conflict," starts one mantra—"and love rather than fear." The quotes stem not from 1969, but from 1996. They refer to work being done not in California, but in Croatia. The Center for Attitudinal Healing is funded by President Clinton's Agency for International Development.

Victims of aggression throughout the Balkans would be enlightened to learn, as the center's literature on its Croatian project explains, "that it is not people or circumstances outside ourselves that cause us conflict or distress [but rather] our own thoughts, feelings, and attitudes." In the work of Gerald G. Jampolsky, M.D., father of attitudinal healing and director of the Sausalito-based center, revelations abound. Take Dr. Jampolsky's assurance that "fear is something our mind has made up, and is therefore unreal," or that "by extending love to others, I need no longer be upset for any reason." Or that "attacking and defending do not bring us inner peace." Words of wisdom for Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians alike.

Zig-zags, waffling, and confusion notwithstanding, both as candidate and president, Bill Clinton has been unambiguous about one thing: the central role that promoting democracy must play in his foreign policy. "It's an imperative of presidential leadership," the president has declared. It's "the moral and strategic imperative for the 1990s," contends his secretary of state. The goal is unimpeachable, but exporting democracy, Clinton-style, at times bears an uncanny resemblance to some of the more troubling and controversial aspects of Clintonism at home. Politically correct multiculturalism, feminism, relativism, and globalism—they've become watchwords of the day and trademarks of the administration. While Vice President Gore has been "reinventing government," foreign policy officials have been "rethinking and [developing] a new understanding of the meaning of national security."

Michael Mandelbaum, of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, says the president conducts "foreign policy as social work." Parts of the president's plan to promote democracy look more like pop psychology and group therapy abroad.

Joseph Duffey, the director of the U.S. Information Agency, frequently quotes the Declaration of Independence, which refers to "a decent respect" for the "opinions of mankind." More than two centuries later, those opinions matter just as much, he often says. But the authors of the Declaration of Independence wrote that it was out of this decent respect for international opinion that they would explain who they were, precisely what they stood for (and against), and "the causes which impel them to separation." Duffey seems to have something else in mind.

Duffey leads an agency of advocacy, but his brand of boosterism is odd. Though the agency's roots go back to the U.S. effort to combat Nazi propaganda during World War II, USIA was formally established in 1953 by Dwight Eisenhower as a weapon against communism. President Clinton had pledged to make USIA a powerful weapon for democracy. But Duffey has been turning public-diplomacy swords into humble plowshares.

Duffey objects strongly to the United States appearing self-righteous or preachy. "The Cold War led us astray," he says. "We got into a crusading mentality." It "somehow made us feel better," Duffey reflects, "to throw messages at other countries." In "defining . . . our security in broader terms," he told a House committee last spring, we have "chastened our sense of what we can do in the world." Duffey openly supports a "de-emphasis on America's leadership role in the world"—a thread of continuity throughout this administration. "Americans now want to move on," he

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says, "and turn attention to more domestic issues." For Duffey, the post-Cold War era is a time to "re-invent ourselves" and to "re-invent America."

Duffey worries, for instance, about the "perils" of "democratic individualism." He muses whether human rights ought to include the right to work, food, and shelter. "Equality," not equality of opportunity, is democracy's strength, in his view. All this may provide useful context for several of his contentions. He has said that "the post-Soviet age" calls for "a fresh look at Cuban realities." That while we have "some concerns" in China, we do not want to "overturn the government." That "large questions are being raised in the Islamic world . . . about American values" and that "understanding nuanced differences between cultures is increasingly important."

"Joe Duffey is a decent and honorable man," says one USIA staffer of the man who was once an ordained minister. He's also "a relic of the Cold War," says another, although not in the usual sense of that term, for Duffey was a quintessential anti-anti-Communist.

A veteran Democratic party operative, Duffey entered politics in 1970, when he ran (and lost) as the anti-war candidate in a three-way race for the Senate in Connecticut against Thomas Dodd and Lowell Weicker. It was then that he got to know Bill and Hillary Clinton. Both worked on his campaign. He later became President Carter's assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, a post subsequently folded into USIA, which Carter renamed the "International Communication Agency." Why the name change? A country as flawed as the United States, went the logic, had no business telling others how to behave. After a stint as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Duffey joined the Democrats' long exile from the executive branch, until the emergence of his former campaign staffer in 1992.

On economic issues, he was warning in the early 1990s à la Robert Reich that "we need to learn a lesson from the Japanese and the Germans." He was deriding Ronald Reagan's "era of excess" and deploring the "seemingly endless contentions between East and West" that occupied U.S. foreign policy. After the Cold War, Duffey saw in America a "dispirited nation" and, not surprisingly, had little sympathy for the Cold Warrior's triumphalism.

At USIA, some of the "malaise" rhetoric and spirit of the Carter days has returned. "In the 1980s . . . we heard so much talk of visions and leadership," said Duffey at his inauguration as president of American University in 1992, just before he took off to join the Clintons. Today "we want to be respected and, more than anything else, we want to be understood," he says now as Clinton's USIA chief.

USIA has never had it easy. Joseph Verner Reed, a former cultural officer at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, writes in his memoirs about the agency's "mediocrity in neon letters big enough for Times Square." And that's from a sympathetic voice writing about the heyday of the 1950s. Even Kirk Douglas takes a swipe in his autobiography, *The Ragman's Son*, reminiscing about travels abroad and "USIA employees [as] little people in little jobs." The indiscriminate attacks on USIA by conservative budget hawks have been as predictable as they are regrettable, considering the agency's central role in the promotion of the American ideal around the world. Duffey's vision hasn't helped. In fact, "every time Duffey comes to the Hill to defend us," says one Voice of America official, "it seems like Congress ends up taking another whack."

USIA sponsors some 29,000 academic and cultural exchanges each year. International broadcasting, which accounts for roughly 40 percent of USIA's budget, includes Voice of America, Radio Martí's broadcasts to Cuba, and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The agency's budget of $1.4 billion is in steady decline. So, too, its mission.

Consider the Voice of America, the most important branch of USIA. Duffey concedes the obvious: that USIA is an instrument of American foreign policy. But he thinks VOA should represent only "to some extent . . . positions of the U.S. government." Fortunately, VOA's current director, Geoffrey Cowan, has become an able and eloquent defender of what USIA folk call "the Radios" and their objectives—a surprising development, given Cowan's reputation as an unreconstructed leftist at the time of his nomination three years ago. Like the Clintons, Cowan worked for Duffey during his 1970 Senate campaign, before becoming a TV writer and a California chairman of Common Cause. Cowan hasn't changed his ways, says a VOA staffer of Republican stripe, but "politics just isn't an issue when you understand what the Radios are about—and Cowan does."

Still, Cowan is swimming upstream, in the face of his boss's universalist bias against the promotion of specifically American values. "We need not put ourselves forward as a kind of utopia to the rest of the world," Duffey told one congressional committee recently. "Duffey wants to de-emphasize the Radios," says one USIA official, and "pump up the more innocuous exchange programs."

"Nations have different interests," observed Duf-

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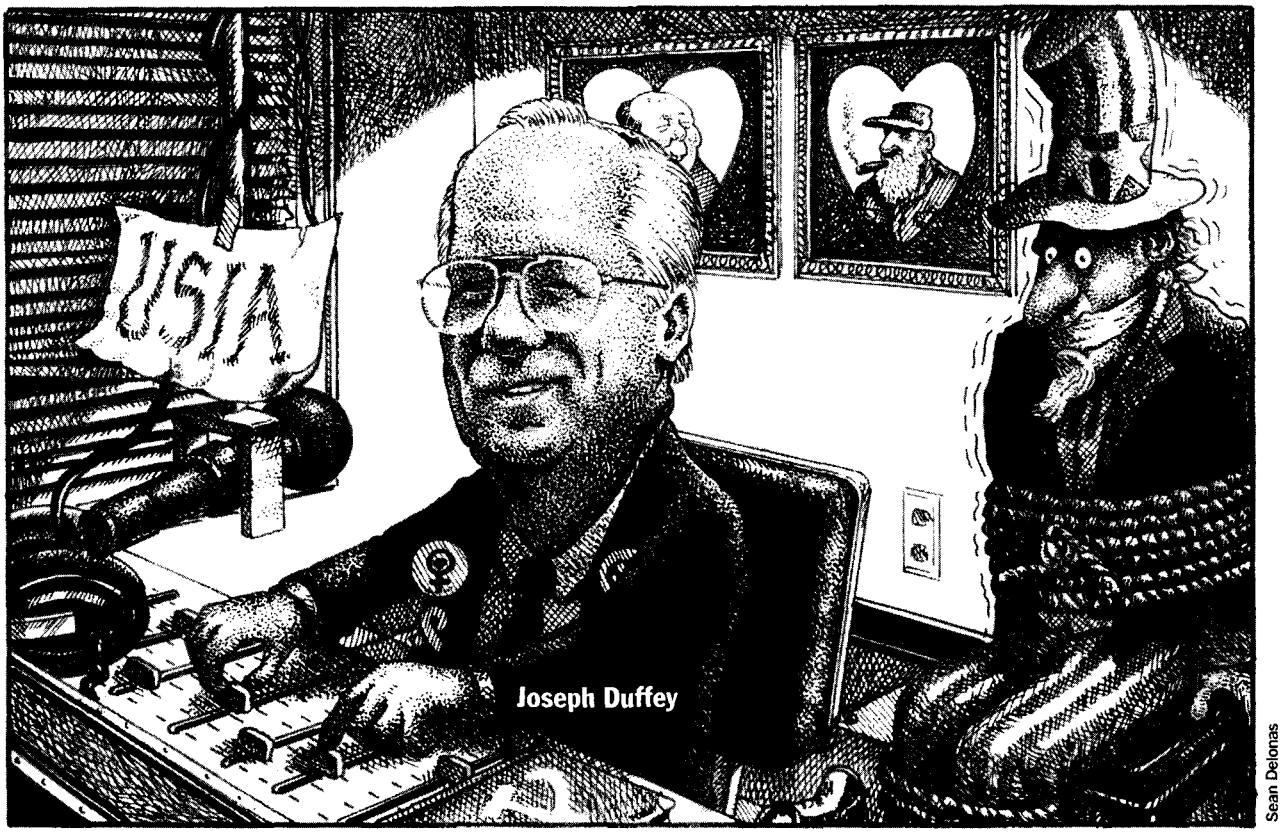

Joseph Duffey

Sean Delonas

fey in a speech at Johns Hopkins University last year. And his agency's mission is "to smooth over those differences [and] to create compromises." When Cuban refugees were holed up at Guantanamo Bay two years ago, Duffey is said to have personally interceded to see to it that Radio Martí broadcasts were edited in such a way as to avoid offending the Castro regime. "I think we must make clear," he says, "that we are not declaring war or trying to oppress the citizens of Cuba." Similarly, on relations with Communist China, Duffey says "we need to move with some humility about our own continuing struggle—not at the same stage, but certainly we are not a perfect society."

Perpetually annoyed by Voice of America broadcasts, the Chinese, who work furiously to jam VOA, have to be pleased by Duffey's attempts to replace the word "jamming" in USIA-speak with polite euphemisms like "technical interference." Duffey has also reportedly pondered an offer likely to further soothe Beijing's nerves—if the Communists stop jamming, VOA will drop its broadcasts in Mandarin, mainland China's most widely spoken dialect.

President Clinton had originally been a staunch advocate of a new Radio Free Asia for broadcast to China, North Korea, and other parts of Southeast Asia. "I've read some of the intercepts," Duffey said two and a half years ago, "and the security people in China are very upset about it." Duffey's concept of American public diplomacy helps explain why Radio Free Asia, now four years overdue, has seen its paltry budget of $25 million wither away, and why its name has become the watered-down "Asia-Pacific Network." The president's feckless approach to foreign policy explains the rest—a far cry from the days when candidate Clinton ripped President Bush for coddling the butchers of Beijing.

Duffey's toothless and foggy approach to public diplomacy is echoed elsewhere in Clintonland. Read the Fall 1995 issue of the Agency for International Development's "Democracy Dialogue" pertaining to the former Soviet bloc and you'll learn that "democratic development has been impeded . . . by the traditionally dominant role of men in Central and Eastern Europe." You'll also learn that at an AID-sponsored conference in Skopje, Macedonia, Sonja Lokar, president of Slovenia's United List party Women's Forum, summed up her keynote address with a plea for a "human-friendly democracy, a democracy of peace, of human rights, of social justice." If this kind of rhetoric sounds queasily familiar, that's because Lokar's

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Women's Forum is an affiliate of Slovenia's former Communist party. Lokar herself is one of Slovenia's leading leftist intellectuals.

AID's penchant for funding foolishness is well documented and long predates the Clinton administration. Its notorious misdeeds have often obscured the utility of a sensible foreign-aid program. Again, Clintonism doesn't help make the case. A Washington-based consulting firm lists an Internet ad in search of experts with "demonstrated competence in gender issues" to work on one of its AID development projects. One result: the creation of AID's new "Gender Analysis Tool Kit"—"10 clear, user-friendly analytical tools" to help policy makers and field workers decide who's been gender-correct. The *Wall Street Journal* breaks a story about racial preferences and set-asides in AID funding for the new South Africa. One reaction: Jesse Jackson stridently defends AID's neo-apartheid practice, arguing that a privileged place for African-American contractors should be self-evident, because of the "sweat equity" and the "jail equity" they accumulated in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Similarly peculiar P.C. thinking penetrates the State Department as well. Thanks to the Bush administration's acquiescence to the United Nations in 1992, the State Department has taken on the responsibility of reporting annually not only on the condition of human rights in the world, but also on human rights in the United States. So now, thanks to the Clinton administration, the annual report explores new definitional frontiers with discussion of "gender discrimination, the death penalty, abortion, police brutality, and language rights." It is now State Department work to make obligatory references to politically correct topics, such as the fate of Native Americans and additional "injustices [that] are also central legacies of American history." Of course, the tragedy of American Indians cannot be dismissed. Neither can the fact that some of the tribes themselves were not exactly defenders of human rights. What any of this has to do with U.S. foreign policy remains less clear.

The bureau responsible for preparing State's human rights report is run by assistant secretary of state John Shattuck, a former ACLU official and Harvard professor. The bureau, previously called Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, was renamed Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor by Clinton and placed under the authority of Timothy Wirth—the former senator from Colorado who has been dubbed "Under Secretary for Export of Political Correctness" by *Wall Street Journal* columnist George Melloan. Wirth immediately made himself known as the Joycelyn Elders of the foreign policy team through run-ins with the Vatican over abortion and the silver bowl of colorfully wrapped condoms he proudly displayed in his office. He relishes pushing limits in other ways, too. In 1993, Wirth accepted a speaking engagement at a drug policy conference in Baltimore hosted by the Drug Policy Foundation, a group that advocates drug "decriminalization" and "needle exchange" programs as a means to bring peace to the nation's war on drugs.

There was reason to wonder what exactly Wirth was going to bring to the task of promoting democracy and human rights when, after he was passed over for the top job at the Energy Department, he was given a specially created State job as a consolation prize in 1993. The answer is, very little. Wirth's office combines oversight of population and migration issues, international drug trafficking, democracy and human rights, and Wirth's real bailiwick—the environment. He takes a strident, hard-line "ecological call to arms approach" on the environment, much like Vice President Gore, who has proposed creating a U.N. "Stewardship Council" modeled on the Security Council.

But Wirth's views on democracy and human rights—the titular purpose of his position—remain difficult to nail down. He believes, for example, that the "promotion [of] democracy" should include "human *and worker rights*" (my italics). Once, during a Soviet-era meeting with Russian officials, then-senator Wirth spent his time advocating an American rodeo-Cossack riding team cultural exchange while congressional colleagues were left to wrestle with issues of Soviet human rights abuses. Today he spends considerable time weaving dubious links between the environment, trade, human rights, women's rights, workers' rights—and animal rights. If Taiwan, for instance, were importing rhinoceros parts from China (the rhino's horn is considered an aphrodisiac in many parts of Asia), it is conceivable, Wirth has told one Hill committee, that the United States could impose sanctions that might include, say, restricting garment imports from either country. As for China, Beijing wins mostly praise from Wirth for its "very, very effective high-investment family planning"—despite the country's distinction for maintaining one of the world's most comprehensive state-coerced abortion policies. In China, central planners stipulate population targets right down to the village and hamlet level, apparently music to Wirth's ears.

Wirth has tried to raise women's rights to the forefront of the administration's agenda. Last year, he steadfastly rejected calls for a U.S. boycott of the U.N.'s World Conference of Women held in China, even

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Timothy Wirth

Sean Delonas

when the conviction of human rights activist Harry Wu threw a wrench into the affair. "There was never any doubt about our going to Beijing," Wirth later said. Once the conference had convened and authorities began to harass "undesirable" elements, he could say only that the Chinese were "incurring an awful lot of frustration and wrath" and that he hoped the U.N. would be "firm." Back home, the White House press secretary backed the soft line, saying that it "would not be the wisest thing . . . to single out one country" for human-rights criticism at the conference.

As uninspiring and muddled as Wirth's views on human rights are, his attempts to link population, environment, migration, and democracy seem even stranger. Wirth's remark on global warming—that "even if the theory is wrong, we'll be doing the right thing"—reminds one of Tina Turner's well-known song, substituting "the facts" for the word "love." Environmentalists call this approach the "precautionary principle." It's also the essence of Wirth-think. When Wirth finished lecturing a refugee advocacy group two years ago that the major causes of international refugee problems were population and pollution, one participant wondered aloud to the *New York Times* what Bosnia had "to do with environmental degradation." A private voluntary organization working in the Balkans recently wrote to Bosnia's president to express fears that the Clinton administration was unwilling to follow through with previously pledged efforts at democracy-building in his country. The organization had just received a request from another private group asking for assistance in distributing shipments of AID-financed *condoms*.

Linking population and the environment to nearly everything under the sun seems a bit confused, to say the least. If there's any method to Wirth's madness, though, "sustainable development" seems to figure prominently. Writing in a recent issue of the *Yale Law Review*, Robert W. Hahn notes at least four widely accepted and differing definitions of sustainable development. The concept, which first surfaced in the 1980s, now permeates State Department speeches and internal papers on democracy. Take, for example, such statements as, "Democracy is a means to achieving sustainable development," or, "It is not always clear that democracy contributes positively to sustainable development," or, "Sustainable development requires more equitable distribution of rights and benefits." These may be important clues to Wirth's own collectivist, redistributionist understanding of the term. The *UN Chronicle* gets even more expansive (Boutros Boutros-Ghali is a fan of sustainable development, too). "Where most of humankind tends to seek dominion over the natural world," an unsigned article asserts, "the approach of indigenous people is the very essence of sustainable development. . . . It is only the new sensibilities the rest of us have . . . that allows [sic] us now to appreciate the way indigenous people instinctively relate to the environment and otherwise conduct their lives."

The environment's growing role in U.S. foreign

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policy and democracy-promotion is likely to mushroom in a second Clinton term. A year ago, Wirth was upset that his boss failed to mention "global issues" in a major speech at Harvard. This year the tune changed, when Warren Christopher suggested to a Stanford audience that overpopulation and environmental factors were sources of political upheaval and cause for U.S. intervention in Haiti and Somalia. The administration now plans to allocate hundreds of millions of dollars to international environmental programs in 1997. U.S. diplomats at key embassies will be reassigned to environmental issues. And a new flurry of intellectual activity can be expected. As Christopher puts it, environmental protection, after all, can "prevent armed conflict" and "help democracy succeed."

It's funny how conventional wisdom shifts. Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton lavish praise on one another, the president dodges a bullet as China backs off Taiwan, and Haiti fails to explode Somalia-style. Charles Krauthammer offers a rare word of praise after the president's recent trip to Japan, and formerly disillusioned Clintonites start talking about a "reassessment" of the administration's foreign policy. German chancellor Helmut Kohl is even reportedly on his way at the end of this month to help his table-mate Bill shore up his image as world leader. It's ironic to consider Bill Clinton campaigning in 1996 as world statesman, but that's just what he has begun to do.

But look behind the façade. The Middle East may be unraveling. China policy remains weak-kneed and dangerous. Appeasement of Russia over NATO enlargement is as short-sighted as it is counterproductive. Look even more closely, and it becomes clear that many of the same wacky and dangerous ideas that make up Clintonism at home infect the president's work abroad. Writing in *Time* a few years ago, Strobe Talbott, now deputy secretary of state, waxed admiring about Europe's current unification experiment, with nation states surrendering sovereignty to Brussels. Perhaps the European Union's federalist project might, Talbott reflected, pave the way for a new globalism and even serve "as the basis for global government." Talbott, everyone concedes, actually runs the Clinton State Department. ♦

A Republican Contract with the World

By Michael A. Ledeen

Pundits love to say that foreign policy doesn't determine presidential elections, but they have very short memories. Kennedy convinced the country he was a tougher anti-Communist than Nixon. Johnson convinced at least part of the American public that the nation could not allow Goldwater near the nuclear button. Reagan capitalized on Carter's Iran fiasco and fantasy-laden approach to the Soviets. Once the American people saw Dukakis sitting uncomfortably in that tank, they voted for Bush. If Dole is going to defeat Clinton, he will have to deconstruct Clinton's foreign policy and present a convincing alternative vision of the American role in the world.

Exposing Clinton's follies is the easy part. The Clinton-Christopher-Talbott-Perry-Lake worldview has proven pitifully, sometimes dangerously, misguided. We were told that trade—even trade in advanced military technology—was a magic solvent that would dissolve the messy problems with the People's Republic of China, but it only made the Chinese Communists stronger and more dangerous. We were told that money would grease the skids for a smooth transition to democracy in Russia, but it only enriched the old Communist elite and may be hastening its return to political power. We were told that Bosnia was a European problem, but after years of dithering only the United States could get the Europeans to deal with their own crisis. Clinton committed the nation's prestige on behalf of democracy in Haiti but has appeased the dictatorship in Cuba, a much more serious problem. He escalated our involvement in Somalia from an

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embarrassment to a debacle. And ambassador-at-large Hillary Rodham Clinton and special adviser Chelsea Clinton globe-trot during school vacations, praising Islam while remaining silent on the enslavement of black Africans in Islamic countries, and endorsing the inalienable rights of the Five Genders. Deconstructing Clintonism will not only be easy, it will be fun.

What is lacking, as surely as in the Bush-Baker-Scowcroft years, is the Vision Thing. Bush and Baker prided themselves on being "pragmatists," as opposed to the "ideologues" of the Reagan years, and Clinton chose his secretary of state right out of that tradition. Warren Christopher began his stewardship at the Department of State by proudly informing the Foreign Service that he did not have a strategic vision and did not want one. We would simply deal with problems as they came up, one at a time. In short, we would conduct our foreign policy just as Sri Lanka or Costa Rica handles its. And so we have.

But America is not a traditional nation. We are the embodiment of an idea: the sovereignty of a free people defined by a commitment to the rights and obligations embodied in the written law rather than by a shared ancestry. Our national interests cannot be defined in purely geopolitical terms because we seek to advance ideals. Therefore, our foreign policy must be ideological—must be designed to advance freedom. Three times in this century we and our friends and allies have been attacked by the enemies of freedom, and three times we have prevailed because of the incomparable power and creativity that only free people, bound together by a common purpose, can generate.

In these days of multicultural relativism, it is unfashionable to state openly what the rest of the world takes for granted: the superiority of American civilization. Yet that fact makes us the automatic target of all tyrants. They attack us because so long as we are here, their own people will want more freedom or, failing that, will brave unimaginable hardships to come here and join us. Americans do not apply for green cards in Tehran, Havana, or Beijing, even though Americans are free to go there. But Iranians, Cubans, and Chinese risk their lives to come here, even though their regimes strive mightily to keep the exits firmly barred, just as the fallen Soviets did before them. We are stigmatized and vilified because our very existence threatens the tyrants.

And yet, with very rare exceptions (Reps. Henry Hyde, Christopher Cox, and Tillie Fowler, occasional sorties by the speaker, and Bob Dole's shining moment on Bosnia), there is no sign of a Republican, or even a conservative, foreign policy. The GOP's revolutionaries have been so obsessed with the trees at home that they have lost sight of the global forest. They do not seem to appreciate that the success or failure of America is a matter of consequence for the entire world. Other countries can deal separately with foreign and domestic policies, but for us there can be no dividing line. We need better schools because without superior education Americans cannot fulfill a global mission. We need greater freedom so that the creative energies of the American people can continue to stimulate and enrich mankind. We need to repudiate the divisive radical separatists, from the racial nationalists to the gay-rightists, so we can demonstrate with renewed vigor that citizenship—not ethnicity, faith, class, or race—is the proper basis for civilization.

The Republicans cannot lead the nation without leading the world. Dole cannot lay legitimate claim to the White House without telling the rest of the world how he intends to lead it, and his global vision must be of a piece with his policies to expand freedom in America. It is time for a Contract with the World. Here is a first draft:

First: Our mission is the advance of freedom. The enslavement of men and women anywhere diminishes us all. So we will support democracies, old and new, and we will support democrats wherever and whenever we can. The new Republican presidency will be a platform for democratic advocacy and for the relentless denunciation of tyranny and slavery. The new secretary of state will not be a political fixer or a corporate lawyer; he or she will be someone whose career and commitment bespeak an unwavering dedication to democratic causes.

Second: We will revive linkage. No money to tyrants. Period. We will promise the American taxpayers that their money will be spent to advance freedom, not to strengthen the slavemasters. No most-favored-nation status to a China that exploits slave labor, tortures and murders its own democrats, and intimidates democratic neighbors. No aid to Russia so long as the Yeltsin regime brazenly violates its agreements with us and marches on its neighbors. No aid to a Bulgarian regime that recollectivizes agriculture and deep-sixes the privatization program. No money to corrupt tyrants who pocket the bulk of our aid and dribble a few fragments to their people. We have developed the most sophisticated money-tracking system in the world, and we will put it to work for the new democrats, so that they will have a chance to recover at least some of the wealth stolen from them by their present and former rulers, from Russia, Bulgaria, and Roma-

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nia to Mexico, Zaire, Zambia, and Tanzania. In the future, American money will fund projects, not regimes. We want to create new wealth, not redistribute our resources.

Third: We will publish our files from the Cold War that deal with the domestic and international activities of the Communist elites. This is important because it will enable the citizens of the new democracies to make informed decisions about their leaders. We will urge the same on Russia and the other former Communist countries.

Fourth: While we believe in free trade, we do not believe in strengthening the enemies of freedom. The greatest folly of the past eight years has been the dismantling of the system of international export controls that restricted the sale of advanced military technology to rogue countries. Today, countries like North Korea, China, Iraq, Iran, and Libya are buying weapons of mass destruction—and the technology to manufacture them—from the West, including the United States. We will tighten restrictions on our own military and dual-use technology exports and work with the other advanced industrial countries to recreate the system of high-tech export controls that worked so well against the Soviet Empire.

Fifth: We will take every legitimate step to transform tyrannies into free societies, even when this means challenging "friendly tyrants." It has sometimes proved necessary to ally ourselves with anti-democratic regimes—as with the Soviet Union in the Second World War, or with Iran and China in the Cold War—but it is only a matter of time before the American people turn against such alliances. Tactical considerations can only temporarily override our strategic mission. Today, this means we must insist that friendly authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia share power with their own people. China may yet embrace democratic capitalism, but the gerontarchs there have shown great fear of real democracy in Taiwan and Hong Kong; to have true friendship with us, the Chinese must liberalize their polity as well as their economy. In the case of anti-democratic enemies, we will attempt to weaken and replace the oppressive regimes and will give all possible support to democratic forces seeking to defeat them. We prefer that this support be open, but it will sometimes be necessary to do it discreetly, depending upon the needs of the democrats.

Sixth: We will restore and expand America's voice to the peoples of the world. Radio broadcasts played a heroic role in our defeat of the Communist empire, and there are now even more ways to reach those whose governments do not want them to know the truth. We will use all means, from radio to direct satellite broadcasting and the Internet, to advance freedom in all its forms. We will not hesitate to inform the Chinese people directly that their government is violating both international standards of civilized behavior and its signed agreements with the United States, or to ask the Japanese people why their government makes them pay triple the world price for rice, or to tell the Iranians that we hope one day to welcome them back to the family of normal nations, or to express our disgust to the peoples of Africa at the practice of chattel slavery by Mauritania and Sudan.

WE HAVE HEARD CHINESE MILITARY LEADERS THREATEN TO SEND MISSILES INTO L.A., AND WE KNOW MUSLIM FANATICS ARE BUILDING MISSILES TO CARRY CHEMICAL WARHEADS.

Seventh: We will provide safe haven for political refugees. Unlike the appeaser in the White House, we will not send Cuban freedom-seekers back to Castro's evil island.

Eighth: We are going to build the best missile-defense system possible. We have heard Chinese military leaders threaten to send missiles into Los Angeles, and we know that the fanatics in Iran, Libya, and Iraq are building missiles to carry their new chemical and biological warheads and are racing to get nuclear weapons. This is technology we can share with allies who need protection from such missile attacks as well.

Ninth: We will embrace the new democracies of Central Europe and the Baltics and will urge our NATO allies to expand the alliance to include them. There is no reason to humor the dangerous post-Soviet desire to maintain the Evil Empire's supposed centrality in world affairs. The former Soviet states must look inward to save themselves from chaos, and we should help them do so by bringing an end to their fantasies.

Tenth: We do not intend to wait for the next Pearl Harbor to build a military force capable of defeating our next enemy. The Clinton administration has permitted rogue nations to acquire advanced technology that can be used against us in the near future, and we will immediately call upon the intelligence community and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assess the implications for our own security. This done, we will take the appropriate steps to strengthen our armed forces. Seri-

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ous leaders are expected to protect against worst-case scenarios.

In short, we will pledge to the peoples of the world, friend and foe alike, that we will do our very best to complete the global democratic revolution that began more than 20 years ago with the end of the Latin European dictatorships in Greece, Spain, and Portugal and continued with the dramatic transformation of Latin America. The revolution destroyed the Soviet Empire, gave hope to the peoples of Africa, inspired the creation of new democracies in Asia, and unleashed the creative juices of the American electorate in 1994. We do not expect to complete this great mission in the lifetime of the next administration, or even in the lifetime of living Americans. The struggle against evil on this earth is eternal. But we will be faithful to our calling, secure in our democratic faith, and resolute in our pursuit of freedom. ♦

A Return to the "Family Wage"

By William Tucker

Democrats and Republicans in Congress are now performing an old ritual dating from the 1930s. The ceremony goes like this: Democrats declare themselves to be kind and generous and ready to "give the nation a pay hike." They raise the minimum wage to X dollars an hour. Republicans cite economic theory. They note—absolutely correctly—that a higher minimum wage may raise the pay of some workers but will force others out of the labor market entirely. Estimates are that the present proposal to lift the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour will cost up to 400,000 entry-level jobs, a significant number held by black teenagers.

Democrats know this. They also know that the public doesn't really understand it. Therefore, they can trade lost jobs for votes. When the jobs start disappearing—well, the Republicans can be blamed for not funding more job training. If the Republicans really wanted to dramatize the foolishness of the issue, why not go the Democrats one better? Why not raise the minimum wage to $10 an hour? Or how about $15? Wouldn't that provide every worker with a living wage? At this point, even the most naive redistributionist would have to acknowledge the trade-off created by the minimum wage.

Appalling as it is to see the truth hung out to dry by such election-year cynicism, there is an issue here worth confronting and a political opening worth considering. This is the long-lost, long-forgotten "family wage"—also known as the "living wage." Although no one seems to remember it, Americans lived for most of the century under this Progressive-era reform. The premise, which originated in European Catholic doctrine, was that every family in society that sent a wage-earner into the market was entitled to a breadwinner's salary from that wage-earner. No longer would it be necessary for a working man to farm out his wife and children to feed and clothe all of them. Instead, the children could be educated, and the wife could manage their upbringing.

By the 1950s, the "family wage" had produced what is fondly remembered as a golden age of the family, in which marriage was a remarkably stable institution and the country had a broad and deep middle class. This is the halcyon world that even many liberals, who once reviled and condemned the 1950s as a decade of cultural stagnation, now look to as an almost mystical era to which they long for America to return.

The minimum wage was part of the "family-wage" doctrine, though only one part. Laws against child labor were another part, and such laws remain reforms only the most radical libertarian would alter today. But other aspects of family-wage doctrine were far less attractive.

It was inherently discriminatory. The family wage was largely denied to blacks and minorities by Jim Crow laws and general discrimination—and, more important, by the imposition of supposedly benign

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reforms (like the minimum wage) that subtly forced blacks out of the labor market. It also discriminated against women, not in an invidious fashion but in a way that was originally supposed to help them by allowing them to remain at home. And, by virtually mandating retirement, it discriminated against the elderly—a reform under increasing assault in recent years.

THE SYSTEM DID FAVOR WHITE MEN. BUT IT WASN'T A PRODUCT OF BIAS TOWARD MEN. IT WAS AN EFFORT TO PROTECT WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

The group that the system did favor was white men. But this wasn't a product of bias toward men. Instead, it was an effort to allot the goods of society by allowing one breadwinner per family. It was undertaken to counteract what had been the principal tactic of manufacturers and capitalists almost since the Industrial Revolution began—hiring unskilled women and children to replace higher-wage men in the marketplace. The main purpose of the family-wage reform was to rescue women and children from the harrowing environment of the factory.

It worked for a long while, probably through about 1970. Since then, the family-wage regime has been completely dismantled. Some of it became outdated, while some of it has been delegitimized out of sheer gleeful stupidity. The result has benefited some groups. But it has also created other inequalities and produced exactly the sort of social stratification Progressives would have predicted. Many of the problems that worry today's progressives most are the very problems created by the dismantling of the old family-wage system.

The one thing we have never done as a society is sit down and say, "This old system no longer works, it's time to replace it with something else," or, alternatively, "This old system no longer works, it's time to let nature take its course." One way or the other, the discussion ought to begin.

Perhaps the best way to understand the family wage is to begin by looking at the effects the Industrial Revolution had on 19th-century society. As Allan Carlson points out in his brilliant 1988 analysis *The Family Wage* (published by the Rockford Institute), industrialism replaced the old craft system in which skilled workmen—with the help of guilds and other protective strategies—were able to command a substantial wage.

When the first factories were built, the machines did not run by themselves. But they did not need skilled craftsmen to run them either. In order to avoid paying craft and guild wages, the factory owners—great levelers that they were—began hiring women and children instead. The result was, in the words of one who experienced the dislocation, "a world turned upside down."

Andrew Ure, a Scottish reformer of the early 19th century, wrote in 1835:

> The constant aim and tendency of every improvement in machinery [is] to supersede human labor altogether or to diminish its cost, by substituting the industry of women and children for that of men. . . . The effect . . . is to discharge the great part of men spinners and retain adolescents and children.

Fifteen years later, Friedrich Engels was appalled by the reversal of roles he found in the mill towns. In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, he recounted a conversation with an unemployed English weaver: "There's plenty of Wark for Women and Bairns [children] in this quarter but very Little for men," Engels quoted his subject. "When we were first married we gat on very well—we got a good firnished home. . . . I could work for us boath. But now t'world is turned upside down. Mary has to turn out to wark and I have to stop at home to mind bairns—and to Wash and Clean—Bake and Mend."

Reformers of every stripe agreed that the key evil was that machinery had enabled both women and children to do what was formerly men's work. With the labor market so broadly expanded, everyone's wages were driven down. Yet it was in no one's interest to fight the system. Every family sent wives and children out to work because every other family did. All collectively needed the money even though the influx of mothers and children into the labor market drove down everyone's wages. As John Stuart Mill (a strong suffragist and author of *The Subjection of Women*) put it: "It cannot . . . be considered desirable as a permanent element in the conditioning of a labouring class, that the mother of the family . . . should be under the necessity of working for subsistence, at least elsewhere than in their place of abode." Mill championed a differential wage system in which men would be paid more so that they could support their families without wages from wives and children.

Toward the turn of the century, this movement began putting on flesh. Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *The Condition of Labor* outlined a plan for a living wage and urged employers to pay each worker enough to support a family. The argument was picked up by European labor unions and instituted by several phil-

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anthropic corporations. It eventually became law in many European countries. Through much of this century French employers have been required to pay a wage that would support a family of five.

In America, its principal advocate was Father John Ryan, an admirer of English Fabian socialism and the author of *A Living Wage* (1906). Arguing that every job should pay enough to support a family, Father Ryan was also realistic enough to realize this meant limiting the role of women and children in the work force. "The welfare of the whole family, and that of society likewise, renders it imperative that the wife and mother should not engage in any labor except in the household," he wrote.

By this time, however, many English and American reformers had hit upon a better tactic for a family wage—minimum-wage laws and other restrictions covering women and children in order to make their employment less profitable. The first minimum-wage law, adopted by Massachusetts in 1911, applied only to women and children, as did the first laws mandating an eight-hour day. They were promptly overturned by the courts, which argued—following the Social Darwinist theories of Herbert Spencer—that they interfered with the right of contract. Heeding the objections of Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, however, the judiciary eventually began to allow such experimentation.

Most important, business leaders began to see the wisdom of the policy. When Henry Ford instituted the "Five Dollar Day" ($5 for eight hours' work) in 1914, it applied only to "married men living with and taking good care of their families," single men 23 and over of "proven thrifty habits," and all women "who are the sole support of some next-of-kin as blood relative." On the other hand, Ford refused to hire married women whose husbands were employed.

"One wage-earner per family" soon became a nonlegislated but widely enforced national policy. It did not discriminate against women as a group: Single women were allowed to work just as readily as single and married men. Whole professions—schoolteachers, secretaries, nurses—came to be dominated by single women. Teachers' contracts often contained clauses forbidding women from marrying during the school year (so they would not have to leave their jobs). A "career girl" was a woman who opted out of marriage and stayed in the work force for an extended period of time. Widows were also allowed to return to the work force—although so-called mothers' pensions tried to help them avoid this fate.

There were glass ceilings. There was male clubbiness. But the underlying logic had nothing to do with gender. The object was to support families. Income was redistributed down the income scale so that families near the bottom could also earn a "living wage" and become part of a stable middle class.

When the Depression hit, all these informal restraints were put under tremendous strain. The urge to send women and children out to work emerged again. My aunt and uncle once told me that when they married in 1935, they kept it a secret for two years so she wouldn't have to quit her job.

The response was the New Deal—which Allan Carlson describes as "coercive traditionalism":

> Under the National Industrial Recovery Act, for example, wage differentials between men and women were first codified. Bans on homework, moreover, were precisely designed to save mothers and their offspring from exploitation and to restore normal homes: "that is, one with a male breadwinner, a housewife, and children."

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 empowered the federal government to eliminate child labor and set minimum wages for large categories of workers. The Social Security Act of 1935 took the elderly out of the work force by encouraging retirement and promising old-age pensions. "Mothers' pensions"—called Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the root program of what we today call "welfare" at the federal level—were also set up for families that had lost a breadwinner.

At the same time, pressure was exerted against "cheap labor," which generally meant blacks. Alfred Kazin once wrote that one of the things he remembers about blacks in the New York of the 1920s was that "they were the ones who always bid low" on home-improvement contracts. The Davis-Bacon Law of 1931 was a prelude to the New Deal, passed specifically in response to itinerant southern black labor crews. Minimum-wage and licensing laws further locked in the advantage skilled white workers had over unskilled blacks without community ties or credentials. The Wagner Act of 1935 formalized these proceedings, in many cases handing over job selection to trade unions, which often ensured that jobs went from father to son. Racial battles being fought today at construction sites around the country are the reverberations of this law.

WHEN HENRY FORD INSTITUTED THE FIVE-DOLLAR DAY, IT APPLIED ONLY TO MARRIED MEN LIVING WITH AND TAKING GOOD CARE OF THEIR FAMILIES.

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The result for blacks was disheartening. Nudged out of the labor market by the many market restrictions of the New Deal, they began to rely more on AFDC, which, through a series of loopholes, became an "unfamily wage," rewarding mothers for not forming families. The result has been a social disaster in its own right.

For the country's burgeoning white middle class, however, the entire effort was an unparalleled success. The world of the 1950s was the crowning achievement of family-wage policy. Millions upon millions of men, from gray-flanneled junior executives to carpenters, plumbers, and auto workers, were able to support their families by doing a day's work for a day's pay.

The system first cracked on a day in 1959 when an Illinois newspaper reporter named Betty Friedan was told after having her first baby that she couldn't reclaim her old job. (The system had relaxed so that she had not been asked to leave when she married.) Friedan was only being asked to do what millions of women had been asked to do before, but she objected. She began free-lancing magazine articles, which eventually led to *The Feminine Mystique*. The rest is history.

In truth, feminists had long objected to the family wage. During the 1920s, the policy had two primary opponents—the National Association of Manufacturers (which didn't want to pay the high wage) and the National Women's party. Their association was so close it was long rumored that the manufacturers' association was funding the party of women.

The objection was clear. Highly educated women—who have always been most active in the feminist cause—felt their job opportunities were being limited by the family wage. Many, like Friedan, were clearly capable of earning more than the majority of men. *The Feminine Mystique* articulated their objections, and the barriers quickly came tumbling down.

Unfortunately, the entry of highly educated women into the labor market set off a chain of events that any Progressive reformer could have predicted. As talented women began out-competing a few men for high-paying jobs (places in law and medical schools, for example), these men found their own earning powers limited. That made it more likely that their own wives would work. These women then took away jobs from other men, who were in turn forced to ask their own wives to work, and so on down the line. Thus, the stunningly rapid transition in which, by the 1970s, most women found themselves entering the labor force of necessity. This transition is commonly attributed to the inflation of the era, but it can just as easily be explained by the collapse of the family wage.

Blacks also fought to break down employment barriers—all to the good. The result has been rising income at many levels. Unfortunately, a growing portion of the black population had already been swallowed by the single-parent culture—and much effort has been wasted on trying to enhance that system rather than undo its anti-family effects.

The social stratification we have today perfectly reflects this transformation. As the latest census figures show, the top quintile of income—what the Clinton administration and others call "the rich"—is largely made up of two-career couples combining professional incomes. Below them is a brittle middle class, where husband and wife are both working and family life is severely disrupted as a result. Below that are the "working poor," where two incomes are barely enough to eke out a living. At the bottom is the portion of the population that has never married. Among households making less than $10,000 per year in this country, half are families headed by a single parent.

In an era without a family wage, the failure to form a family or keep it intact has proved to be the greatest economic disaster.

This theme has been amplified by the power of assortive mating. In the old days, a doctor usually married his nurse. Today he marries another doctor. Upward mobility has become restricted as couples choose each other for earning-potential as much as for other qualities. This has made men at the bottom of the income scale particularly unappealing as marriage partners—which is a major reason poor families are no longer forming.

What can we do about it? There are several options. One is simply be to leave things as they are. This is the supply-side argument and goes like this: The contribution that women make to the economy far outweighs any disadvantage created by the upward redistribution of income. Because of the contributions of women, we have a bigger pie to slice. We are all much better off without the family wage.

Yet this leaves many people uneasy. By yielding to economic pressures to put women in the job market, we have placed enormous strains on family life. These strains are felt most at the bottom, where marriage is viewed as a virtually irrelevant institution. Women and children at this level may be "maintained" by welfare payments, but the results are hardly benign. The sheltering structure of the family is lost, and the "missing men" return as the nation's crime problem.

Is there any way a family wage can be reconstructed without the discriminatory aspects? Dick Armey and the House Republicans made an attempt to address the problem in April when they suggested increasing the earned-income tax credit for families

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with children. Unfortunately, they proposed funding this increase by eliminating the tax credit for low-income families without children. This might be called robbing the poor to pay the poor. If anyone should pay the cost of a family wage, it would seem only fair that it be people further up the income scale.

The minimum wage, on the other hand, is an even more inept tool. The result of increasing it will be to deny the least skilled employment in order to raise wages a bit for people just up the ladder. This could be called robbing the poorest to pay the next poorest.

One alternative might be to return to the family-wage principle of one breadwinner per family, but on a non-gender basis: The breadwinner could be either the husband or the wife. Or, if this proved too draconian, employers might at least be allowed to give preferences to employees whose spouses do not have high incomes or to discriminate ever so slightly against those whose spouses do. Yet aside from being difficult to enforce, this notion would require a measure of social consciousness and self-restraint. And the late 20th century is not likely to be remembered as the Era of Self-Restraint.

On the other hand, the solution liberals are likely to propose—meat-ax income redistribution from top to bottom—will have the usual unproductive side-effects. With welfare currently structured as it is, taxing the rich and giving to the poor simply means taxing the married to give to the unmarried. No such effort will be able to go forward without a complete overhaul of the welfare system.

Yet we should not be discouraged. The original family-wage regime wasn't put together at a single stroke. It was a series of intelligent reforms (child labor laws, for example) that not only made sense in themselves but also had the happy consequence of serving the greater good. Progressives succeeded because they recognized the consequences of what they were doing. With all the facts before us, we surely can do as well as they did. ♦

Justice Harlan's Constitution

By Ralph A. Rossum

May 18, 1996, marks the 100th anniversary of Justice John Marshall Harlan's famous dissenting words in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* that the "Constitution is color-blind." *Plessy* upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation in general and of the "separate but equal" doctrine in particular. Harlan was alone on the Supreme Court in arguing that the Constitution prohibits the state from taking race into account in its treatment of people. On the ballot this November in the nation's largest state is the California Civil Rights Initiative, which says simply: "The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting." That such an initiative is necessary speaks volumes about the abject failure of the Supreme Court to make Harlan's noble sentiments the "law of the land."

Many people wrongly believe that the Supreme Court vindicated Harlan's dissent when, in Chief Justice Earl Warren's unanimous decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* in 1954, it held compulsory school segregation unconstitutional. They have been deceived. The *New York Times* began the deception when it editorialized at the time of *Brown*, "It is fifty-eight years since the Supreme Court, with Justice Harlan dissenting, established the doctrine of 'separate but equal.' . . . It is forty-three years since John Marshall Harlan passed from this earth. Now the words he used in his lonely dissent in a 7-to-1 decision in the case of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* in 1896 have become a part of the law of the land." It further insisted that "there was not one word in Chief Justice Warren's opinion that was inconsistent with the earlier views of Justice Harlan." Of course, it was also the case that "not one word" of Warren's opinion even mentioned Harlan or his dissent.

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The truth is that *Brown* did not vindicate Harlan's dissenting dictum; neither has any subsequent court decision. Justice Brennan's words in his concurrence in *Regents of the University of California* v. *Bakke* (1978) are unfortunately correct: "The position . . . summed up by the shorthand phrase 'our Constitution is color-blind' . . . has never been adopted by this Court as the proper meaning of the Equal Protection Clause. Indeed, we have expressly rejected this proposition on a number of occasions."

In his *Plessy* dissent, Justice Harlan declared simply and eloquently: "In the view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior dominant ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer to the most powerful. The law regards man as man and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved." Harlan grounded his opinion firmly on the principle that all men are created equal. Because of this equality, he insisted that no man should be discriminated against or preferred because of his race and that no man should have his claims to justice evaluated on the basis of his race.

The court rejected Harlan's approach in *Plessy* and has continued to reject it since. (While *Adarand Constructors* v. *Pena* (1995) is encouraging—the court held that any form of racial discrimination, including against whites, must be subjected to "the strictest judicial scrutiny"—only Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia unequivocally argued that "under our Constitution, the government may not make distinctions on the basis of race.") In *Plessy,* the court approached racial discrimination from a psychological perspective. Justice Henry Brown, speaking for the court majority, declared, "We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's arguments to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with the badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it."

An analysis of Chief Justice Warren's opinion in *Brown* reveals that it operates from the same psychological perspective and employs the same constitutional reasoning, although reaching a different conclusion. Warren argued that "separate but equal" educational facilities are "inherently unequal" because they generate feelings of inferiority in blacks. "To separate [black schoolchildren] solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. . . . Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy*, this finding is amply supported by modern authority. Any language in *Plessy* contrary to this finding is rejected. . . . We conclude that in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

According to Warren, the real deficiency of *Plessy* was not that it asked the wrong question—Does segregation harm black schoolchildren?—but that it gave the wrong answer. *Plessy* was defective not because of its constitutional reasoning but because of its inadequate knowledge of psychology. The court said nothing in *Brown* to contradict *Plessy*'s assertion that whites cannot be discriminated against because they will not feel stigmatized or inferior, and, as contemporary reverse-discrimination cases such as *Bakke* make apparent, it continues to adhere to that *Plessy* formulation. Consider Brennan's observation in *Bakke*, in which he justifies the use of racial quotas by the medical school of the University of California at Davis: "Nor was Bakke in any sense stamped inferior by the Medical School's rejection of him. . . . There is absolutely no basis for concluding that Bakke's rejection as a result of Davis's use of racial preference will affect him throughout his life in the same way as the segregation of Negro school children in *Brown* would have affected them."

For the past century, therefore, the Supreme Court has essentially preserved intact the constitutional reasoning of *Plessy* that a racial classification violates equal protection only if it stigmatizes the affected group. What separates *Plessy, Brown,* and *Bakke* is not a disagreement over what the Constitution requires but simple differences in factual interpretation over whether certain classifications stigmatize. Even *Adarand*, encouraging as it is, subjects programs of racial preference to strict scrutiny because of their tendency to stigmatize those who receive preference.

Harlan's dissent would have taken constitutional law and race relations in an entirely different and much more salutary direction. Harlan argued that equal protection of the law is guaranteed to every person as an individual and not on the basis of racial classifications or group identifications. He understood that rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment are personal rights. By contrast, the court has continuously treated racial discrimination as a psychological

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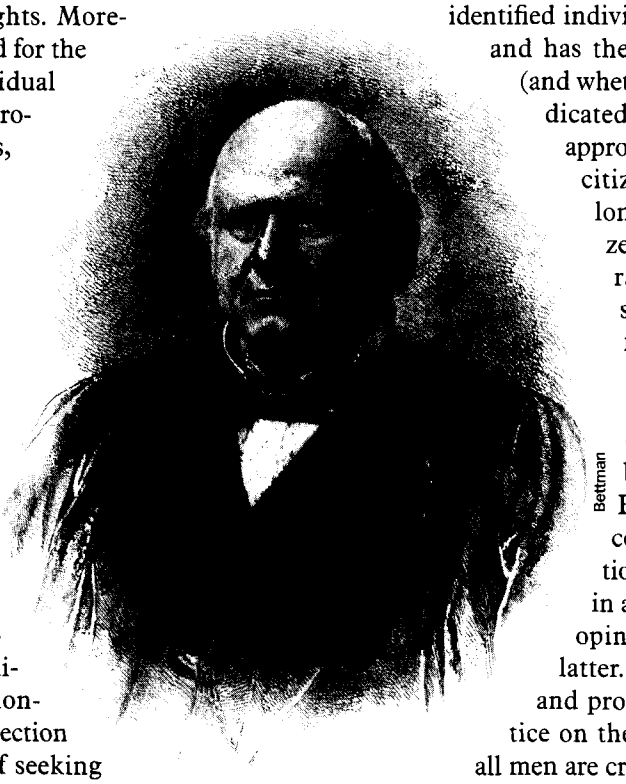
problem and has consistently afforded relief to individual plaintiffs only when it has been convinced by the facts that the discrimination in question has stigmatized the entire group of which the plaintiff is a member. In *Plessy*, since it did not believe that racial segregation stigmatized blacks, it saw no need to regard Homer Plessy as a man and protect his individual right to equal protection of the laws. Similarly, in *Brown*, although the court had now been persuaded by modern psychological authority that segregation did stigmatize blacks, it again saw no need to concern itself with the individual plaintiffs and their particular deprivation of rights. Moreover, just as there was no need for the court to demonstrate individual injury, there was no need to provide individual relief. Thus, in its 1955 decision implementing *Brown*, it felt free to instruct the schools to desegregate with "all deliberate speed," a formula that provided the apparently successful plaintiffs in *Brown* with no more than a promise that, sometime in the future, other people would be given the rights that the court said they had.



Bettman

John Marshall Harlan

In his *Plessy* dissent, Justice Harlan denied that individual plaintiffs must demonstrate a need for judicial protection of their rights. The plaintiff seeking vindication of his constitutional rights need have suffered no harm—psychological or otherwise. The plaintiff's capacity stoically to endure discrimination—like his surroundings and color—was irrelevant. The plaintiff's rights were derived from the fact that he was a man. Not so for the court; from *Plessy* on, it has continually and consistently demeaned those who seek its aid by obliging them to demonstrate that they have suffered. Whereas Harlan invited the plaintiff to come before the court as a man and proudly demand the full vindication of his rights, the court has reduced him to a supplicant who must prove to the court that he has suffered some harm and, on the basis of that harm, beg the court's assistance.

The court's failure to follow Justice Harlan's "color-blind" approach has proven to be as destructive of the notion of citizenship as it has of the concept of rights. Beginning with *Plessy*, the court has first identified citizens in terms of their surroundings and their color and then rendered the kind of justice it believes is appropriate for them. By so doing, it has pursued a contemporary version of feudal sociological jurisprudence that the liberal American tradition expressly sought to eradicate, not embrace. Feudal society first identified serfs, freeholders, and noblemen by their economic and social status and then measured the justice due each accordingly. In its race cases, the court has operated in much the same way; it has first identified individuals in terms of their race and has then determined their rights (and whether these rights will be vindicated) on that basis. This approach destroys the concept of citizenship altogether. No longer are men seen as citizens—as bearers of rights; rather they are viewed as supplicants—as petitioners for favors.

In *Brown*, the court was presented with a choice: It could do what most people believe it did and vindicate Harlan's dissent, or it could continue to approach questions of racial discrimination in a manner consistent with its opinion in *Plessy*. It chose the latter. Instead of joining Harlan and properly grounding racial justice on the immutable principle that all men are created equal, the court chose to continue to erect its racial policies on the shifting sands of psychological authority. Instead of embracing Harlan's argument that the law regards man as man, it chose to continue to employ constitutional reasoning that proscribes racial classifications if they cause harm, not if they trench upon rights. Last month's Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *Hopwood* v. *State of Texas* ordering the University of Texas Law School, upon pain of punitive damages, to adopt immediately a color-blind admissions process provides the Supreme Court with the opportunity it missed in *Brown*. It should accept *Hopwood* for review and use it as the vehicle for abandoning its practice of receiving and granting petitions seeking race-based favors and privileges and for proclaiming with Justice Harlan that the Constitution is, once and for all, color-blind. ♦

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Mrs. Roosevelt, Liberal Icon

By Noemie Emery

Dynasties track, in their family members, the course of great causes and movements. Three of the Kennedys—brothers Jack, Ted, and Bobby—stand for the phases of the modern Democratic tradition at its height, its ebb, and its transitional agony. Three of the Roosevelts—President Teddy, his niece Eleanor, and the cousin she married—track the arc of liberalism in the American century: in its promise, its apotheosis, and its decline.

Historically, the role of the Roosevelts has been to thread the family conscience through the process of politics, at steadily escalating levels of public commitment. Politically, the family begins with the first Theodore Roosevelt, a rich New York businessman who made a life's work of compulsive compassion, energetically endowing a series of charities with what historian Peter Collier has called "maniacal benevolence," going so far as to educate orphans he found on the street. His son Teddy was the first activist president, imposing the power of the federal government between the citizen and the full force of the market economy, urging a "Square Deal" for American workers. Under Teddy's cousin Franklin and the spur of a crisis, the Square Deal became the New Deal, a proactive policy to manage and control the market economy.

Teddy and Franklin were Theodore's heirs, merging his aims with political strategy. But it was Eleanor, the human bridge between them—Teddy gave her to Franklin at their wedding—who was the true heir to her grandfather Theodore's manic benevolence, merged with what her friend and biographer Joseph Lash has called "a seemingly inexhaustible spring of human sympathy."

To Teddy and Franklin, politics was purpose plus power plus pleasure in battle. To Eleanor, it was charity on a national landscape, philanthropy writ large. Of the three, she had the purest character, with an almost saintly simplicity of purpose. But she also had the drawbacks that go along with this temperament, among them a persistent tendency to will the end of something while loudly disapproving of the means. Thus, she wished to quash dictators while disliking the military; to pass bills (for social goals) without logrolling or compromise; to win the electoral landslides that kept Franklin (and herself) in positions of power while urging her husband (and others) to antagonize, or disavow, his political base. In FDR's lifetime, these contradictions were muted, as her activism was edited by a supremely hard-headed master of politics. After his death, however, they went unchecked, and were ever more evident, undermining her party, and causes. Liberalism mutated into the "L-word," and its hold on the public declined.

How this occurred is a riveting story, a stern warning to all parties and movements, told with inadvertent skill in *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Post-War Liberalism*, a billet-doux from liberal historian Allida M. Black (Columbia University Press, 298 pages, $29.95). When does a bad book still have something to tell us? When it unwittingly indicts itself. Eleanor Roosevelt was a moral presence of hurricane force, with a holy rage against all forms of human injustice, yet able to make striking misjudgments. A connoisseur at the fine art of deploying people (as presidents should be), FDR used her to broaden his efforts, while knowing when to ignore her suggestions. Modern liberals, on the other hand, have lost the legitimacy of her moral convictions, while taking her errors to new and strange heights. Black chooses to treasure for valor and wisdom what even friendly biographers like Lash and Doris Kearns Goodwin have noted as Eleanor's lapses in judgment. The result is a book that is unwillingly useful. Starting out to praise liberalism as it evolved after FDR's passing, it shows, in the form of some missteps, where she and where it all went wrong.

First, her pacifism. Early on, Black shows Eleanor waging a lonely fight through the war years to keep FDR focused on the domestic issues that had once been his preoccupation. But, "the more she tried to discuss these issues . . . the more disgusted she became with his wartime priorities, and the advisors who urged him to act on them." Black quotes her as saying, "I bring the American people to the President . . . constantly reminding him of the American consumer, and the people [with] whom he's gotten out of touch." But his "wartime priorities" involved beating Hitler, and the very survival of the "American consumer"—much less his continued ability to consume anything whatever—depended completely on what the "ambassadors and admirals and generals" were able to do. In fact, Mrs. Roosevelt knew

Noemie Emery, whose "Abortion and the Republican Party: A New Approach" appeared in our Dec. 25 issue, is writing a book on sex, politics, and wives.

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this, and her instinctive pacifism had long since been overcome by her husband's insistence that fascism had to be defeated by military power. But the pacifism was there, and, greatly exaggerated, was to mutate into the Pat Schroeder view of military activity, which sees the armed forces as a great place to employ gays and women, and the military through the prism of Tailhook, not Desert Storm.

As U.N. ambassador, Mrs. Roosevelt was cured early of the idea that the Soviet Union was anything but an enemy of American ideals and interests. But in her words and acts are traces of other things—multilateralism, a distrust of confrontation, and a sense of diplomacy as social work—that would later cause trouble for liberals. She backed the generous Marshall Plan, but not the critical Truman Doctrine. She disliked Churchill's prescient Iron Curtain speech. Of Churchill himself, she was always suspicious; she "watched the developing affection between the President and the Prime Minister with a worried eye," writes Doris Kearns Goodwin, who quotes a grandson as saying, "She saw in Churchill a male tendency to romanticize war."

Churchill, said Eleanor's friend Martha Gellhorn, "got Roosevelt steamed up in his boy's book of adventure. . . . He loved the derring-do and rushing round." Passing the two in their improvised war room, Eleanor noted, "They looked like two little boys playing soldier. . . . They were having a wonderful time—*too* wonderful, in fact." The tone of this—"little boys playing soldier"—fits perfectly with such modern conceits as "missile envy" or the idea that warfare is merely the acting-out of infantile male aggression. But the boys and their toys make life safe for the girls and their social programs, as both TR and FDR knew.

Eleanor's discomfort with anti-communism was another leading indicator of liberalism's moral deflation. Stunned by the militancy of the Soviet Union after World War II ended, many Americans became anti-Communists. Appalled by the excesses of some of these people, others became anti-anti-Communists. Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the latter: so much so that at the moment of highest national drama in the late 1940s—the confrontation between Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers—she seemed moved by the need less to see Hiss as guiltless than to establish that the lower-class, fat, ostentatiously Catholic Chambers could never, ever be right. "Chambers crystallized all the political and *patrician* [italics mine] objections she had to the HUAC process," Black writes. "How could she believe Chambers, whose major character trait she described as 'a very unsavory personality,' and whose veracity was only supported by a committee whose integrity she never believed?" She could not. Unable to blame Hiss (or clear him), she displaced the burden and blamed Chambers for having named him, blamed the press for reporting it, blamed the jury that convicted Hiss, then blamed the jury system. Richard Nixon corrupted the press, which corrupted the public and jury. Hiss had been "failed" by the judicial system; a victim of the "politics of fear."

TO ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, POLITICS WAS CHARITY ON A NATIONAL LANDSCAPE, PHILANTHROPY WRIT LARGE.

In the end, many liberals overcame their objections to the naming-names process to conclude Hiss was guilty of something. Eleanor never did. Black blames the former for succumbing to waves of mass terror, and praises Eleanor for standing by her guns. "Even after [Hiss] was convicted of perjury . . . Eleanor Roosevelt continued to argue that Chambers's credibility, rather than Hiss's loyalty, was the key to the trial," Black writes. But what she stood by was not guns, but her personal prejudice, which led her to indulge in self-deception: What Chambers was—or represented—was less important than what Hiss had *done*. People were judged not on their own, but on one's distaste for their opposite numbers.

Mrs. Roosevelt was not fooled by the Communists, but her political heirs would take this to extreme dimensions, excusing, or idealizing as heroes and rebels, murderous Third-World regimes. The Viet Cong were heroes, because the Diems were oppressive. The Sandinistas were heroes, because the Somozas were thugs. Castro was a freedom fighter, because Batista was corrupt.

But the complex truth was that both Batista and Castro were dictators. The House Un-American Activities Committee did some dirty work *and* some people were actually spies. These double negatives posed no problems for Churchill, who welcomed Stalin into World War II while being prepared to fight him later, or for FDR, who once called an ally "our son of a bitch." But it would prove too complex for too many liberals, who found some villains guiltless by virtue of contrast. It was to erode their ability to make rational judgments, and public trust in them.

FDR and Teddy Roosevelt created the activist presidency, believing the state should respond to discrete social problems. Eleanor, and some of her followers, tended to carry this into hyperactivity, a belief in the state without restriction, a

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belief that defined progress in terms of state control and state money and thought even ephemeral and indefinable things such as "social justice" and "economic democracy" were goods that the state could deliver, like mail. For this reason, her best crusades involved things people should be made to *stop* doing—persecuting blacks, punishing Jews, interning the Nisei—rather than schemes she created herself. Her own plans tended to founder, victims of her weakness for mandate-expansion. Given a job at civil defense in wartime, she hired friends at high wages to teach people dancing. Earlier, a pilot plan to give government housing to unemployed miners evolved into a program for a model village, with factories, enlarged houses, and progressive schools. But the improved homes ran eight times over budget, parents protested the modern curriculum, and the miners, Lash writes, "became dependent . . . so much so that when the school bus broke down, they brought it to the White House garage for repairs."

Recently, another Eleanor admirer—Hillary Clinton—pushed an effort to improve health-care delivery into a government takeover, with guidelines laid down for the number of medical specialties and the percentage of minorities to be employed in each of them. Another massive federal plan for child immunization reached few of the children, and wasted millions of dollars in badly warehoused vaccine.

In 1942, Doris Kearns Goodwin writes in *No Ordinary Time*, there was a family quarrel over the shift to a wartime economy. Eleanor favored civilian conscription: "All of us—men in the service, and women at home—should be drafted, and told . . . what to do." Franklin did not: "Wary of having the government assume too much power over something as sacred as a man's right to a job, he chose instead to rely on indirect persuasion."

Goodwin cites this as an attitude-chasm, Eleanor favoring "imposed order and discipline," with FDR "temperamentally opposed to the imposition of compulsory discipline" on the "rich variety" of human life. In retrospect, it is this shift, from Franklin's to Eleanor's view of persuasion, that blew the Democratic party open after 1965. Instead of using carrots and sticks, incentives and goads, to encourage integration to bubble up from the bottom, liberals created a fully matured model of an integrated society and tried to force it down from above on the culture.

The elaborate construct of quotas and mandates now being painfully dismantled by the courts and the voters seems an Eleanor model that broke FDR's party by setting its voters at odds. To liberals in the diversity lobbies, this was a barely adequate use of federal power. But the parent, seeing his children bused to bad schools in strange places; the small businessman, seeing his low bid trumped by a higher one made by a protected contractor; the employee, seeing his promotion go to a less qualified other; none of these people could understand why their government had decided to punish them and defected to the Republican enemy in droves.

In Mrs. Roosevelt's day, with government smaller, it was possible to have too rosy a view of government providence. Today, there is no excuse whatever for Allida M. Black to write the following words *as a compliment*: "More than any of her contemporaries, she defined the liberal agenda that would emerge in the decade after her death . . . public and low-cost housing, public education, affirmative action, universal health care, government support of the arts and the United Nations, regulation of corporate development and serious consideration of other cultures and political philosophies . . . that is so seriously attacked today." Confront the shade of Eleanor Roosevelt with a) a public-housing project in Chicago; b) the public-school system in the District of Columbia; c) the race-norming systems and multicultural curricula in most modern colleges; or d) the federally subsidized "art" of *Piss Christ* and Karen Finley, and *she* would attack it, as would her uncle and mate.

Mrs. Roosevelt, Black says, believed in "bold" leadership, with no room for trimming or compromise. Thus, she chided Truman for his ties to urban bosses and southern conservatives; Kennedy for efforts to broaden his voter base; FDR for all of the above. "Mrs. Roosevelt had always been on guard against the wiles and stratagems that her husband had employed in pushing for his goals, lest the objectives be compromised," Lash writes. "When she saw a thing to be done, she charged ahead, asking 'Why not?'" Why not? Because the timing was wrong, or because votes were missing. Or because other matters took precedence.

Goodwin quotes FDR telling NAACP head Walter White why he could not back an anti-lynching measure: "Southerners . . . occupy strategic places on most of the House and Senate committees. . . . They will block every bill I ask Congress for to keep America from collapsing. I just can't take that risk." The irony is that wiles and stratagems, timing and compromise, are needed to reach great objectives. Had Lincoln run in 1860 as an abolitionist, he could not have saved the Union or issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Had FDR not used guile and subterfuge, he could not have won four presidential elections. America might not have entered the war, or been able to win it. And few today would know Eleanor's name.

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The first lady of legend, the figure of national and international stature, is the result of the White House and the platform it gave her, and that rested in turn upon FDR's wiles and the votes of the people she urged him to alienate. Remove these blocs—the South, and the ethnics—from the Democrats' column, and the coalition collapses; as do FDR's power and Eleanor's voice. She goes back to being another professional activist, little known outside of political circles, with little power to move her crusades.

In the end, the purism she urged would have stifled her influence and done her own causes great harm. Its end is not the triumphal reign of Franklin, but the Goldwater and McGovern campaigns. The McGovern campaign, which did shear off both the South and the ethnics, is purism brought to its final conclusion, distilling the party down to its liberal core with nothing around it. The upside is that you are suitably "bold" and properly true to your principles. The downside is you carry one state.

One final episode—adjudged a triumph in Black's book—seems to sum up what went wrong. From the White House years on, Eleanor Roosevelt was an ardent supporter of desegregation, scolding her husband and a long train of other political figures when they did not seem to move fast enough. Her critiques in the 1950s of Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy, among others, were scathing; she claimed their perceived "moderation" on this sensitive issue made them unfit for the office of president. But when her favorite Adlai Stevenson enraged civil rights leaders by saying that America must "proceed gradually" with school integration in the wake of the 1954 *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision, she quickly rushed to his defense. She defended him again—and again and again—when he refused to support the Powell Amendment (which would have suspended federal aid to segregated school systems), refused to condemn the Emmett Till lynching, and refused to commit himself to the use of federal marshals to carry out the *Brown* ruling.

"Fundamentally, there is [not] any cleavage between my point of view and that of Stevenson, and the really wise Negro leaders," she said, and in so doing she broke with her friends, backed a "moderate" plank at the party's convention, and finally threatened to leave the NAACP if it did not stop attacking Stevenson. Her efforts worked, and Stevenson was nominated in 1956 without splitting the party. That done, she reverted to campaigning for Stevenson before black and liberal audiences, blasting Eisenhower for stands on race *more* liberal than Stevenson's had ever been.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Kent Lemon

Black cannot bring herself to forgive Adlai Stevenson, whom she seems to condemn by omission. But she does defend Mrs. Roosevelt, claiming her switch from activism to power politics and quickly back again as an example of political "finesse." This is not finesse. This is hypocrisy: an obvious use of the selective high dudgeon for which many liberals are known.

Liberals invent Borking, take it to egregious heights with Clarence Thomas, then complain loudly when it is used, far less cruelly, on a Lani Guinier. They protect, for 20 years, a Senator Packwood, as useful to feminist causes. They campaign against greed, while up to their own necks in dubious land deals. Anita Hill is an iconic figure, while Paula Jones, with a far more credible story, is fair game for sexist abuse.

This was an aberration in the life of Eleanor Roosevelt, brought on by her faith in a man she admired. But what was a lapse in her own life is a way of life with her heirs. In *The Years Alone*, Joseph Lash, a genuine FDR liberal, called her behavior "opportunistic," and disapproved delicately. Black, on the other hand, does not know this is wrong, much less what is wrong with it. Between the two views is a vast moral chasm. And the Left is a spent moral force.

Reviewing Goodwin's book in the *New Republic*, Joe Klein described the modern national Democrats as Eleanor's party, purified at last of the South and the ethnics, "skewed—well beyond the bounds of reason—toward isolationism, industrial policy, the unlimited rights of the afflicted, and social science run amok." This is only partly accurate: It is less the party of Eleanor Roosevelt than the party of Eleanor's faults, having successfully shed all the things worth the keeping and hoarded all that was not.

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The "divine fire" of the Roosevelt breed has mutated into self-satisfaction and the hypocrisies needed to sustain these illusions, while the errors have been magnified beyond belief. Much like Mrs. Roosevelt's affection for Adlai Stevenson—she seemed to like him *because* of his weaknesses—Mrs. Roosevelt's new crop of friends (like Black) seem to admire her for all the wrong reasons: for the mistakes, for the misjudgments, for the false promise of an activism that attempts to transcend and escape from politics but in the end is self-defeating. As Mrs. Roosevelt liked Stevenson because he was not John Kennedy, her fans seem to like her because she was not FDR: tough, assured, ruthless, warlike, and glamorous, the Rogue Male right down to his toes.

As the feminizing of the Democratic party continues, Eleanor Roosevelt is supplanting her husband at the heart of a party that feels closer to her than to him. As a pacifist, an outsider (who spoke for outsiders), a wronged wife who built her career on the emotional wreck of her marriage, an ardent crusader for racial minorities, a friend to a number of lesbian women, she hits every key in the cluster of interest groups that now form the party and are uneasy with the macho flair of FDR.

Black describes the widowed Eleanor as "freed from the constraints of the White House," "relieved that FDR's death freed her to pursue her own goals." But FDR and the White House helped make her a legend. This eagerness to separate her from Franklin (and Teddy), and to raise her above them, is a bad sign for liberals. It denigrates the worldly springs that raised her up.

At her best, Eleanor Roosevelt fed into American liberalism an inspiring rage against human injustice, part of the "divine fire" she shared with her family. At worst, she fed into it too an ingenuousness that would afterward sap its vitality, among them the high-sounding but dangerous notions that one could have government without politics, leaders without ambition or ego, and progress without guile or compromise.

Postwar liberals lost most of the fire (or dribbled it away in affirmative action), while inflating the ingenuousness beyond all rationality. How this occurred is what *Casting Her Own Shadow* tells us, which gives it perverse fascination: A terrible book about Eleanor Roosevelt, it is a fastidious guide to the mechanisms by which movements corrupt and then destroy themselves. ♦

Movies

Stoney End

By Thom Geier

In the 1992 Hollywood satire *The Player*, a studio bigwig played by Tim Robbins endures a pitch from an *auteur* wannabe for a prospective work titled *Habeas Corpus*, about a woman on death row and the district attorney who falls in love with her but is unable to save her. The pitch represents a bid to stake a place for serious art in mainstream cinema. To prove his anti-commercial agenda, the sanctimonious director promises no stars and no "Hollywood ending." As he tells Robbins: "This story is just too damned important to risk being overwhelmed by personality."

Since this is a satire, and a Robert Altman satire at that, things go awry. *The Player* concludes with a three-minute sequence from the completed film, in which D.A. Bruce Willis machine-guns his way into the gas chamber to unstrap inmate Julia Roberts just as she gets the juice. As they stroll off into the sunset, the two trade a memorably inane bit of dialogue. ("What took you so long?" "Traffic was a bitch.") It's a hilarious scene, inviting viewers to cluck to themselves: *You know, that's just the sort of thing Hollywood would do. And I wonder what the rest of that film would be like.*

Wonder no more. Touchstone Pictures, a branch of the Disney empire, has concocted a feature-length remake of *Habeas Corpus*, complete with high-voltage stars, an implausible romance, and a story line every bit as preposterous as the makers of *The Player* imagined it to be. *Last Dance* stars Sharon Stone as a death-row inmate in a garden-variety southern state and Rob Morrow as a preppie lawyer assigned to work on her clemency case. Along the way, director Bruce Beresford and screenwriter Ron Koslow serve up more knee-jerk clichés in 103 minutes than can be found in a week-long NEA convention. They have taken an issue treated so intelligently by Tim Robbins (as director-writer, not actor) just a few months ago in *Dead Man Walking* and turned it into Hollywood boilerplate—*Dead Woman Limping*.

Here's the bill of fare Beresford asks us to swallow. Sharon Stone plays Cindy Liggett, a woman who as a teenager got high on crack, robbed a house, and brutally murdered two teen lovers. One of the victims was the son of a heavy-hitting donor to the state governor, a

Thom Geier is associate editor at U.S. News & World Report.

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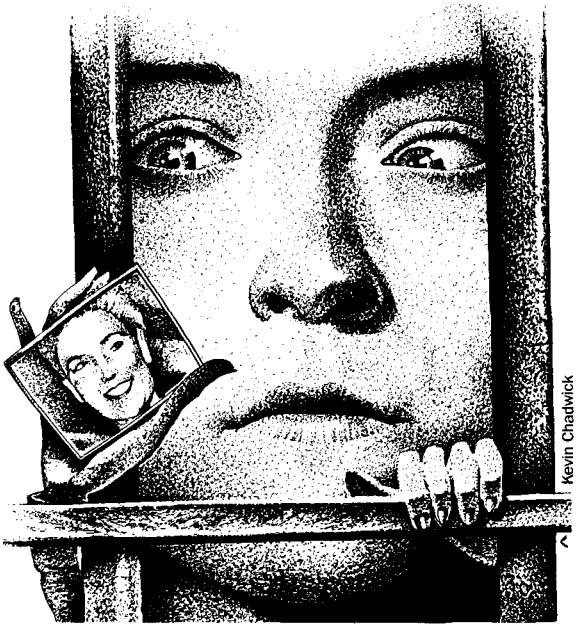
connection that helps earn Cindy a death sentence. By the time we catch up with her, though, Cindy is less dangerous than your average guest on *Donahue*. She shuns TV, takes art classes by correspondence, and helps keep her fellow inmates in generally good spirits. How this woman kicked her drug habit and became such a model citizen is left maddeningly unexplored. In fact, aside from some cussin' and outbursts of bad attitude, one might mistake her prison for some kind of adult summer camp.

Just as her appeals are about to expire and her termination appears imminent, along comes Rick Hayes (Rob Morrow), a dissolute law-school graduate who has spent the last couple of years burning up his trust fund on world travel. Thanks to his big brother, the governor's Stephanopoulite chief of staff, he gets a job preparing cursory files for the state's clemency board. He lands Cindy's case and sees in Sharon Stone what everyone else in the theater does: A movie star who definitely does not deserve to die.

He falls in love, though we're thankfully spared any hanky-panky in the pokey. Conveniently, he even finds a technicality that might justify a plea for clemency: Cindy's crack use was never introduced before her sentencing. But mainly, Morrow is in the movie to experience the sort of life-changing transformation he must claim his favorite death-row inmate has already undergone. His argument for clemency is premised on an interesting notion: If a convicted murderer can inspire even one work-phobic, bleeding-heart Democrat to discover the joys of gainful employment, then surely her life must be spared. (If this idea catches on, we might even institutionalize some kind of Head Start program for limousine liberals.)

The movie's premise, aside from being laughable, significantly gums up the works dramatically as well. We are presented with a central character who has done bad things in her past but is introduced as a saint in frame one. Forget for a moment how absurd it is to canonize such a woman, who never once mentions her victims or suggests any remorse for her crimes. By presenting Cindy as a "reformed" woman, we are deprived of anything approaching character development. Not that Sharon Stone doesn't try to give Cindy some depth. With an Oscar nomination already in her pocketbook, Stone here takes another stab at Serious Acting. We know that she is Serious because she (a) struggles in and out of a southern drawl, (b) breaks down several times in tearful outbursts, and (c) wears unflattering prison garb instead of her usual form-fitting drop-dead couture. She also appears in very little make-up and with stringy dishwater-blonde hair—except in brief flashbacks to the decade-old crime, when she appears younger and with long, straight brown hair. These black-and-white sequences suggest Stone's public defender blew it yet again: It appears Cindy was so strung out on crack that she not only committed two brutal murders but turned herself into a ghastly-looking brunette!


Kevin Chadwick

Of course, Stone isn't alone in looking ghastly. Morrow, the other major player in this alleged drama, is similarly deprived of anything close to a story arc. Just how has his character been transformed by his experience with Cindy and his brief foray into the real workaday world? The record is painfully clear: He blows off his girlfriend, angers his brother, loses his job, and is seen in the final scenes in the midst of another transcontinental trip. Net character development: zero.

Amazingly, *Last Dance* seems to celebrate this kind of shirking of responsibility. In a late scene, Cindy even rejects the prayers of a man of the cloth—a direct contrast to the serious treatment of religion and prayer Robbins presented in *Dead Man Walking*. That film featured Susan Sarandon as a nun who counsels convicted murderer Sean Penn to accept responsibility for his actions (and simultaneously accepts responsibility for the pain her prison ministry brings to the families of his victims). Where Robbins crafted a nuanced portrait of the death-penalty issue in all its moral complexity, Beresford seems more interested in a paint-by-numbers polemic. He pulls out all the stops, from crucifixion imagery to last-minute phone calls in the execution chamber.

The only thing missing is Bruce Willis toting a tommy-gun and blasting some life into the thing. ♦

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"Can Shalala open a pic?" he said. "I don't think so."

By Judy Keen
USA TODAY

Buoyed by recent efforts to shore up cattle prices and lower gas prices, the Clinton administration has taken dramatic action to halt the recent run-up in movie ticket prices. "We're going to drive prices down, down, down," predicted a gleeful Robert Reich, the labor secretary. "It's an up, up, up for consumers!"

The method: Release the entire library of federal training films into the marketplace. A film by the Army Corps of Engineers, "*The Use of Duct Tape in Air Conditioning Renovation Projects*," will open on 2,300 screens on Friday. In an effort to capture the lucrative Jane Austen filmgoing market, the administration will change the film's name to "Mansfield Park."

It will have stiff competition at the multiplex from another title from the executive-branch vault, "So You Went and Caught a Social Disease," a documentary narrated by Health and Human Services secretary Donna Shalala.

Martin Grove of the *Hollywood Reporter* was doubtful about Shalala's ability to bring in viewers. "Can Shalala open a pic?" he said. "I don't think so."

Meanwhile, the White House denied reports that, hours before the president announced he had instructed the government to buy millions of tons of beef to boost sagging prices, Hillary Rodham Clinton was seen at the Chicago cattle futures market. "Don't short!" witnesses said she shouted. White House counsel Mark Fabiani said Mrs. Clinton was speaking in opposition to the release of the Shalala film.

Administration officials are working on several similar gestures for the coming weeks. Following the slow start of the Boston Red Sox, acting U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky will be sold to the team for a sub-cabinet official to be named later. She is expected to start in left field. Barshefsky will bring much needed power from the right side of the plate, which has been lacking in Massachusetts, a state Clinton must hold if he is to win re-election.

The administration's most innovative approach involves the hush-hush Gore Task Force on Late Video Rental Fees (GTFOLVRF). GTFOLVRF will use the National Guard. Guardsmen will take special care to return videos rented by independents recently registered through motor-voter means on the days these videos are due. Ira Magaziner has reportedly been put in charge of the project.

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